



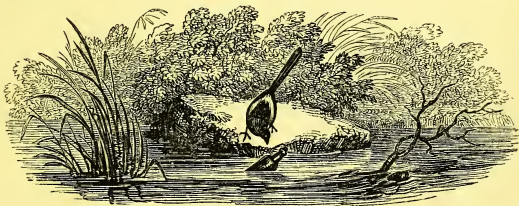
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WILLIAM WISEMAN'S

STORIES ABOUT BIRDS.

"A thousand wild birds hurry to their nests
With their bright wings of glory, and rich starry crests."



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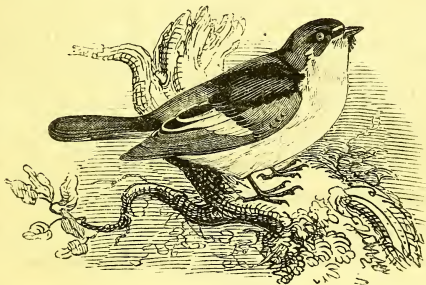
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STORIES ABOUT BIRDS.

WARBLING FLYCATCHERS, THEIR NEST-BUILDING AND NESTLINGS.



WHILE at the little village (now the city) of Camden, in New Jersey, whither I had gone for the purpose of watching the passage of certain Warblers, on their way north, early in the month of May, I took lodgings in a

street ornamented with a long avenue of tall Lombardy-poplars, one of which almost reached my window. On it, too, I had the pleasure, shortly afterward, of finding, in actual progress, a nest of these interesting little birds. Never before had I seen their nests placed so ; and never before had I an opportunity of examining the particular habits of the species with so much advantage. The nest, although formed nearly in the same manner as several others which I once obtained, by cutting them down with rifle balls, from the top twigs of the tall trees to which they were attached ; instead of being fastened to the fork of a twig, was fixed to the body of the tree, and to that of a branch coming off from it, at a very acute angle. The birds were engaged for a week in the construction, working chiefly in the mornings and evenings. Previous to their selection of the exact place, I frequently saw them examining the tree, and warbling to each other while they did so, as if in congratulation on their good fortune in finding the situation. One morning, I observed both of them at work : they had already attached some slender blades of grass to the knots on the branch and bark of the trunk, and had given them

a circular disposition. They continued working downward and outward, until the structure exhibited the form of the future delicate tenement. Before the end of the second day, bits of hornets' nests, and particles of corn-husks, had been attached to it, by pushing them between the rows of grass, and fixing them with silky substances. On the third day, the birds were absent, nor could I hear them any where in the neighbourhood; and, thinking that a Cat might have caught them from the edge of the roof of the house, I despaired of seeing them again. On the fourth morning, however, their notes attracted my attention before I rose, and I had the pleasure of finding them again at their labours. *

MEMORY, UNDERSTANDING, AND OBSERVATION OF BIRDS.

SENSIBILITIES.

It has often (though without much reason) been spoken of as something marvellous, that *dogs* appeared

* Audubon's Ornithological Biography.

to know so well the difference between persons well or shabbily (that is, *very shabbily*) dressed, and to be peculiarly impatient of the presence of the latter, if seen upon their masters' premises.

The Dogs in question are such, of course, as live in well-dressed families, and to whose view, ill-dressed persons offer the idea, not only of something strange, new, and even so far dangerous; but also, (through seeing beggars, and persons more or less resembling them, sent away from the door, or at least not welcomed into the house), the further idea, that there is still more to be apprehended from these, than from all other strangers.

It is observable that the same Dogs have no general dislike or animosity towards ill-dressed persons, but can pass them peaceably upon the road, or even mix in friendship with them, in that or in any similar situation. It is only when they seem to invade the dog's and his master's *home*, that they show them any incivility.

But, if it can be thought marvellous in a creature so uniformly sagacious, and so continually governing itself by its experience, as the *dog* is universally known to be; now much more striking is it to hear, that a *bird*,

and so small a bird as a Bulfinch, should be capable of making any distinction of a similar kind? Yet such, as we seem to be assured, is the fact.

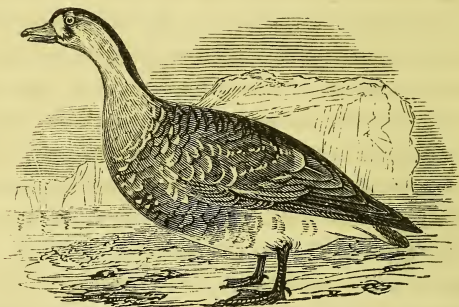
“Bulfinches,” says an author, “remember very well (and often too well) any one who has injured them;” and from his account, it further appears, that they can adopt a prejudice against such as bear a resemblance to their foes. “One of them,” says he, “having been thrown down, along with his cage, by some vulgar and shabbily dressed people, did not, at first, seem to be much disturbed by the accident. But it was soon found, that from that date it would fall into convulsions as soon as it saw any shabbily-dressed person; and it died in one of these fits, eight months after the first affair*.”

The recollection of voices, and attachment to those they know, have also been taken notice of in tame Bulfinches. Escaping from an aviary, and living in the woods for a whole year, they have recollected the voice of the person who first reared them, and returned to her, never more to leave her. Others, when forced to leave their first master, have died of grief†.

* Bechstein's Cage Birds.

† Buffon.

After these statements, as to Bulfinches, there is no risk in repeating certain anecdotes of GEESE. More than one example is upon record, of strong and unconquerable attachment, upon the part of GEESE, both to



men, and to animals like themselves, though of the most distant species; and of the attachment being entirely returned. There is a story of such an attachment between a Goose and a Yard-dog. The Goose constantly shared the kennel of the latter; but, in the end, it met its death, through attempting to enter the latter, at a moment when, by singular accident, a strange Dog, and

not the Goose's familiar friend, was in possession of the house.

There is another story of a Goose which, after the manner of a Dog, was accustomed to go abroad so constantly with his master, that, having one Sunday morning come after him to church, care was subsequently taken to confine it upon such occasions. Through some neglect or other, however, the Goose got loose one Sunday morning after, and aware that its master had given it the slip, only to go to church, it immediately followed him thither, and entering the great door, which the warmth of summer permitted to stand open, it waddled leisurely up the aisle to its master's pew.

Finally, it has been lately reported in the newspapers, that a gentleman and his Goose, upon their being parted for a season, through the gentleman's visit to a friend in another part of the country, and his leaving his Goose behind him, were, both the one and the other, afflicted with the pangs of absence ; but, as to the poor Goose, it pined, and refused its food so obstinately, that to send it after its master was soon adjudged the only means of saving its life : and the meeting released the latter

from many a regret, and the Goose from the danger of death !

After this, then, we may go back again to Bulfinches, and extract another trait from our indefatigable and tender keeper of tame birds. “A tame Bulfinch,” says he, “may even be accustomed to leave his cage, and go abroad into the air, provided the house be not too near a wood. The surest means,” he adds, “of preventing too long an absence, is to put a female Bulfinch in a cage in the window, or to leave her in the room, with her wing clipped. His affection will soon bring him back to her, and he will certainly never abandon her altogether *.”



* Bechstein.

THE DREAMS OF BIRDS.

THAT the sleep of Dogs is not without its dreams, appears to be a truth universally allowed ; and if such is really the case, the same phenomenon doubtless attends the sleep of a large variety of the remaining inferior animals, as well birds as beasts.

We all remember that the gallant Cock, who was accustomed to call up, at an early hour, the maids of the good housewife in the fable, fell a victim to his vigilance, through the displeasure of those against whom he announced the approach of sunrise. But whatever the opinion of those lazy damsels in particular, this early waking and loud communicating Chanticleer has commonly met with the applause and admiration of mankind. A Persian poet indulges a fancy upon the subject, which has thus been rendered into English verse :

CHANTICLEER.*

WHEN dawn tints the sky with a rosy suffusion,
And spreads all its sweets round in boundless profusion ;

* By the author of KEEPER'S TRAVELS. See Burford Cottage, and its Robin Redbreast, by the same author.

Dost thou know why the Bird of the Morning complains?
Dost thou know what he says, in his sharp, chiding strains?
He says that 'tis shown, in the mirror of day,
A whole night of thy life hath unseen past away,
Whilst thou on the soft couch of indolence lay!

Of a very opposite sentiment, in the meantime, was an elegant Scottish poet—the author of that very sweet and intellectual poem, *THE MINSTREL*. From some unaccountable cause Dr. Beattie bore an antipathy to the “Bird of the Morning;” a particular of his biography which the readers of his poem ought to know, in order to their understanding to what origin to ascribe the wrath expressed in it against what he there calls “fell Chanticleer;” and evinced by the ludicrous but malevolent wish, that the sleep of the poor bird may be perpetually haunted by *dreams* of his natural enemy—the Fox!

It is the Cock's *dreams*, however, thus supposed to be the realities of the author of *THE MINSTREL*, that have led to the recollection of that bird, in this preface to the account which has been given of the distressing *dreams* of a Bulfinch—sickly dreams—or dreams doubtless occasioned by sickness; but so like in all their circum-

stances, whether of suffering or pacification, to the dreams of a sick child, or elder sleeper. We have the relation in these words :—" A tame Bulfinch, kept by a lady, being subject to very frightful dreams, which made it fall from its perch, and beat itself against its cage, would no sooner hear the affectionate voice of its mistress, employed to awaken it, than, notwithstanding the darkness of the night, it became immediately tranquil, and re-ascended its perch, to go to sleep again !"

VARIOUS CAPACITIES FOR LEARNING.

THE tame Bulfinch is easily taught a variety of habits unknown to it in its woodland life: among others, to come for its food, or to fly at all times to the hand, upon the ringing of a little bell.

As to the learning, however, of notes or tunes, different birds display the same variety in the degree or nature of their talent upon this, as upon all other subjects, is displayed by human scholars. " One young Bulfinch," says our author, " learns with ease and

quickness; another with difficulty and slowly. The former will repeat, without hesitation, several parts of a song; the latter will hardly be able to whistle a single part after nine months' uninterrupted teaching. But it has been remarked that those birds which learn with the most difficulty, remember the songs they have once learned the best and longest, and rarely forget them at all, even when moulting!

BEAUTY OF BIRDS, AND PLUMAGE OF THE KEY WEST PIGEON.

IN the island of Key West, an island upon the coast of the Floridas, M. Audubon, with the aid of a companion, and after severe toils in making his way amid woods, and rocks, and thorns, and stubborn thickets, succeeded in obtaining a specimen of a beautiful species of Pigeon which is native to it. "After crawling to the spot," says M. Audubon, "I found him smoothing the feathers of a Pigeon, which I had never seen—nay, the most beautiful yet found in the United States. How I gazed on its resplendent plumage! How I marked the

expression of its rich-coloured, large, and timid eye, as the poor creature was gasping its last breath! Oh! how I looked on this lovely bird! I handled it, turned it, examined its feathers and form, its bill, its legs, and claws, weighed it by estimate, and, after all, formed a winding-sheet for it of a piece of paper. * * * *

As we sat near the shore, gazing on the light pea-green colour of the sea, I unfolded my prize; and, as I now quietly observed the brilliant hues of its plumage, I could not refrain from exclaiming,—‘But who will draw it?’—for the obvious difficulty of copying nature struck me as powerfully as it ever had done, and brought to my memory the following passage: ‘*La Nature se joue du pinceau des hommes. Lorsqu’on croit qu’elle a atteint sa plus grande beauté, elle sourit et s’embellit encore * !*’”

In India the common attachment of mankind to the Pigeon species is manifest. At Benares, and at various

* In English—“Nature makes mock of the human pencil: when we think that she has reached her extremest beauty, and that we can copy her in that, she smiles at our self-complacency, and adorns herself still higher!”

other places, they are kept in vast numbers, as objects of religious reverence ; but at Lucknow, the seat of the court of the King of Oude, their numbers are still greater than at any of these, though more esteemed, at this latter city, for their plumage and other beauties, than from the notion of their sanctity : and here the different breeds are preserved with the greatest care. On the summits of nearly all the roofs of the palaces, and particularly of the *zenanas*,* these birds are seen in flocks of from seventy to a hundred each. They are selected for the beauty of their plumage, and each variety is kept in a separate flock. Boys are employed to teach them different evolutions in their flights. When on the wing, they keep in a cluster, and at a whistle fly off into the expanse, ascend, descend, or return home, as the signal directs. When turning suddenly, and darting towards the sun, the gleam of their variegated necks produces a beautiful effect ; and when they alight on the ground, they form a carpet of the most beautiful colours, and the richest design imaginable. So great is the native attachment to the delights which the view of

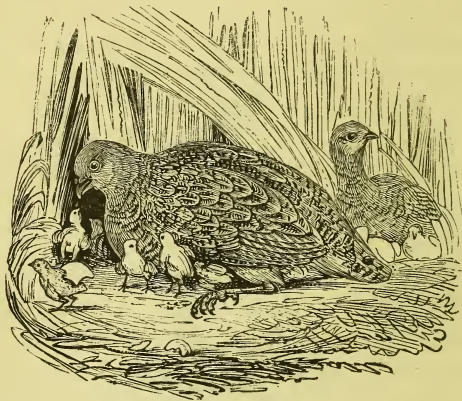
* The apartments of the women.

these birds afford, that it is recorded of some of the princes of Lucknow, that in their country excursions, “ they were accompanied by their women and Pigeons.”



PARENT BIRDS.

PARENTAL STRENGTH AND ARTIFICES OF PARTRIDGES.



THE parental affection of birds is quite as strong as that discoverable in any description of beast. There seems to be a popular error, (though a very ancient one,) even in what has been said of the want of care for its young, in the instance of the Ostrich. Be this, however,

as it may, the zeal and devotion of the common Hen to her brood of chickens is every day seen; and of the same *gallinaceous* kind with the common Hen, is the Partridge*, of whose power and will to defend its young, against the smaller birds and beasts of prey, and most wonderful ingenuity and devices for enabling them to escape the sportsman and his dog, we are about to mention examples.

The eyes and ears of a man working in a field, were suddenly attracted to some objects in strong commotion upon the ground, at a short distance from where he stood; and upon approaching them, he found them to consist in two Partridges, a male and a female, and a Carrion Crow, the latter being in the act of defending himself, as well as he could, against the fury of the former; and so successful, and so absorbed in the fate of the contest were the two Partridges, that, having first overpowered the Crow, they actually held him down,

* The name of *Partridge* is an English corruption from the French *Perdrix*, in which, as will be seen, the *e* is exchanged for an *a*; the *d* for a *t*; and the hard sound of the *x*, for the soft one of *dge*: and the French *perdrix*, is from the Latin *perdix*.

till he was seized and taken from them by the observer. Upon search, a nest of young birds, which had been but a short time hatched, was found concealed close by, under covering of the grass; whence it appeared that the Crow, a mortal enemy to all kinds of game, in attempting to take off a young Partridge, had brought upon itself the attack of the parent birds, conducted, with the help of their chance friend, with such entire success.

But the Partridge kind are really too weak to depend, in, perhaps, the great majority of cases, upon an appeal to force for the preservation of their little families; so that stratagem, and often an absolute theatrical performance of pretended characters, are much oftener their resource; such as affecting themselves to be dead, or lame, or broken-winged, in order to draw the enemy upon themselves as an easy prey, instead of their young ones, whether as ready to be picked up, or else soon to be caught or shot, because unable either to run or fly!

“The parent,” says an excellent writer upon these subjects, “feigns lameness, and even death, to withdraw the aggressor. The noise and confusion which occur when a person comes suddenly or unawares on a young

brood of Partridges is remarkable. The shrieks of the parents, apparently tumbling and escaping away with broken legs and wings, is a deceit well acted, and which often succeeds in withdrawing the Dog and his human attendant beyond the possibility of discovering the hiding places of the brood*." When this is attained, their wonted strength (so lately affected to be lost) is soon recovered, and a flight to a considerable distance is taken ; but by the time the enemy has reached the marked spot of the flight, the bird has gone round to her charge, where she is ready to act the part of broken legs and wings over again if necessary.

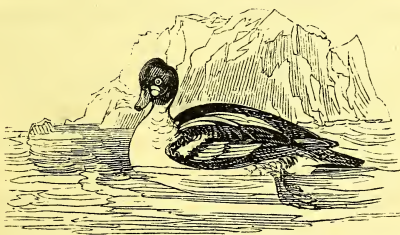
To speak still further of the *gallinaceous* birds, and in respect of their attention to their young, there may be said a word of the maternal devotion of the Black Grouse, or Moor Fowl, and of the accommodating spirit of the Common Hen. The heath and furze upon the moors in Scotland and the North of England, are often set on fire, either accidentally or maliciously, during the sitting of the Grouse upon their eggs, or the nurs-

* Selby's British Ornithology.

ing of their young ones in their nests ; an event which, to a greater or less extent, involves, in course, their destruction. But the shepherds and others, who traverse the moors after the fire is extinguished, continually find among the fragments and ashes of the burnt furze and heath, the remains of the parent Grouse, which had suffered themselves to perish by fire upon their nests, rather than forsake their charge !

As to the Common Hen, in the meantime, what we have to remark, is the facility with which, under the strong inducement of maternal duty, she can accommodate herself to circumstances the most at variance with her nature. She is often exercised, as is well known, in the singular acts of sitting upon Ducks' eggs, and rearing a brood of young Ducks instead of Chickens ; and, upon such occasions all persons have remarked the distress and consternation with which, for the first days after hatching, she sees her yellow nurslings run to the water, and swim away from the dry land ; how she agitates herself at the edge of the liquid element ; runs into it, if it is shallow, after the brood ; and sometimes leaps into it, if it is deeper, or flies to a stone or post in the

middle of a brook or pond, in order to meet and save what, at the beginning, she thinks the drowning runaways! But the very opposite habit has been known to be acquired in the same bird. A Hen, which, after rearing several broods of Ducks, was at length permitted to sit upon eggs of her own species, and to rear the brood which came from them, was now as much perplexed that her Chickens would not swim, as she had previously been that her Ducks could not be kept out of the water; and she was to be seen, both leading them to the water's edge, and flying to the post or stone in the midst, to lure the chickens into the ways of ducks!



MOULTING OF BIRDS.



It is one of the beautiful arrangements of creation, that the moulting or change of feathers in birds, invariably takes place at the season when the food of the species is in chief abundance.

During the moult, not only the birds are out of health, but, from the loss of their feathers, they cannot fly far in search of food.

At this season the birds of the woods are seen to ap-

proach fields and other cultivated places, where, from the plenty of insects and seeds, they cannot fail of food.

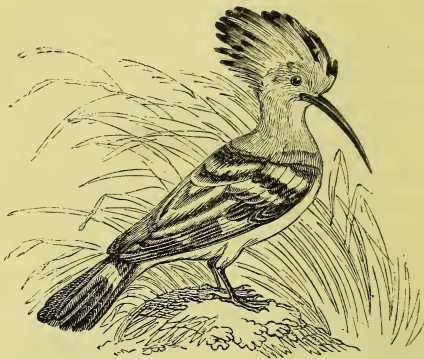
Those who keep tame birds, should attend to them during their moulting, in the manner which these provisions of nature show to be requisite.

The birds should be supported with better food than usual, and yet not with such as, being of a heating quality, may increase their feyerish symptoms.

Instructions upon these points are to be found in BECHSTEIN'S BOOK OF CAGE BIRDS.



THE HOOPOE AND ITS MISTRESS.



BUFFON tells us of a tame Hoopoe which died of hunger, perhaps through the same cause as I have elsewhere mentioned.

“I once saw,” says the great naturalist, “a Hoopoe which had been taken in a net, and which being at the time an old bird, or at least full grown, must have possessed all its natural habits. Its attachment to its mistress was very strong, and even exclusive. It appeared

to be happy only when alone with her. If strangers came unexpectedly, it raised its crest into surprise and fear, and hid itself upon the top of a bed which stood in the room. Sometimes, while the strangers still remained, it was bold enough to return from its hiding-place; but even then, it fled directly to its beloved mistress, and seemed to see no one but her.

“It had very different tones; one soft, as if from within its breast, and which seemed to be the very seat of sentiment, which it addressed only to its mistress, the other over sharp and piercing, and which expressed either its anger or its fears.

“It was never kept in a cage, either day or night, but was permitted to range the house at its pleasure: yet, though the windows were often open, it never showed the least desire to escape—its wish for liberty being less strong than its attachment.

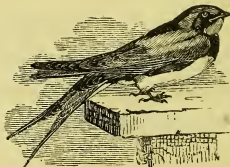
“The pretty bird, through mischance, died at length of hunger. His mistress had kept him four months, feeding him wholly upon bread and cheese.”

LONG LIFE OF BIRDS.

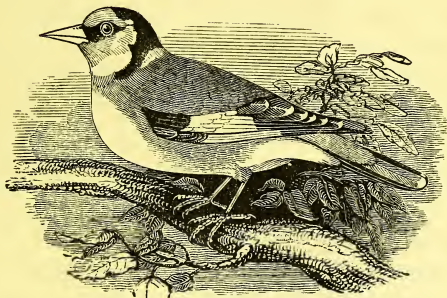
IN a state of confinement, the length of a bird's life very much depends on the care taken of it. There have been some Parrots that have lived more than a century ; and Nightingales, Chaffinches, and Goldfinches have been known to live more than twenty-four years in cages. Tame Swans have been known to live three hundred years.

Quadrupeds are estimated to live only six or seven times as long as they take to grow ; but birds live fifteen, twenty, and even thirty times, the periods of their growth.

The length of life in birds, is sometimes thought to follow from the light and porous substance of their bones.



CRIES, SONGS, AND TALK OF BIRDS.



THE cries of birds are an intelligible language, as well to themselves as to others. The common Chaffinch, when calling its companions, often repeats "Iack, iack ;" when joyful, or when angry, "Fink, fink," though the angry tone is loudest and most quick. Its cry of sorrow is "Treef, treef."

Birds which, like the Redbreast, Siskin, and Goldfinch, do not sing all the year, seem obliged, after moulting, to learn to warble, as if they had forgotten how ; "but

I have seen enough," says Professor Rennie, "to convince me, that these attempts are merely to render the larynx pliant, and are a kind of chirping, the notes of which have but little relation to the proper song; for a slight attention will discover that the larynx becomes gradually capable of giving the common warble.

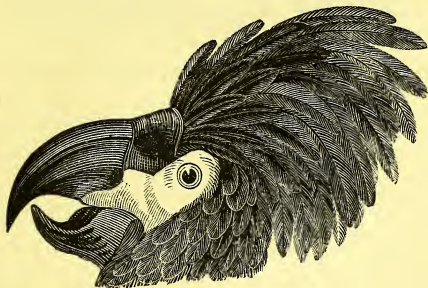
"This method of recovering the song," continues my author, "does not then show deficiency of *memory*, but rigidity occasioned by disuse of the *larynx* (or wind-pipe). The Chaffinch will exercise itself this way some weeks before it attains its former proficiency; and the Nightingale practises as long the strains of his beautiful song, before he gives it full, clear, and in all its extent."

The strength and compass of a bird's voice depend on the size and proportionate force of the larynx. In the female it is often weak and small; and this, in the instances of so many species, accounts for her want of song.

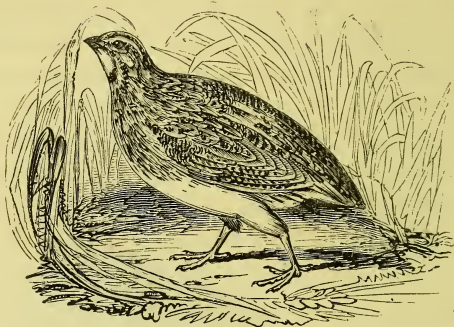
Thus the sound of a voice depends upon the windpipe; but the articulation of sounds, which is what we call *language*, or the operation of the tongue, or *langue*, so called in French, really depends upon the tongue. Par-

rots, Jays, Magpies, Ravens, and Starlings, which are said to “*talk*,” have large, fleshy, undivided *tongues*.

The larynx, in birds, may be enlarged and strengthened; the first by practice, and the second by nutritive food. It is thus that birds, in a state of nature, sing in the plentiful season, and sing the more and better for their practice. But another thing is *memory*. Some species of birds *remember*, better than others, the notes which they happen to hear.



THE QUAIL JEALOUS OF ITS SONG.

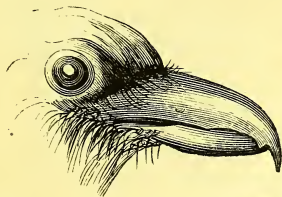


THE Little Shrike, a species of Pie, about the size of a Skylark, is a bird common upon the Continent of Europe, but unknown in England.

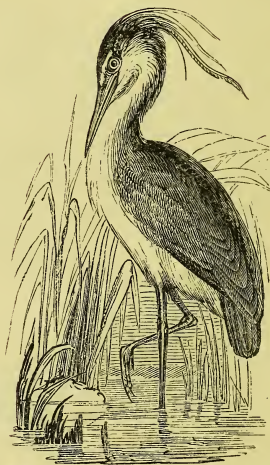
The hen of this species has no song at all, and the cock is without a song of his own; but he imitates with wonderful fidelity the songs of other birds. "I have observed," says Dr. Bechstein, "that he likes best of all to repeat the cry of the Quail. A Little Shrike, which I had in my collection, always stopped his song, however

lively, when it heard that of a Quail, which was its companion, for the purpose of imitating it. But the Quail, before, as afterwards happened, he became accustomed to this proceeding of the Little Shrike's, was always very jealous; and, as soon as he heard himself imitated, ran about in every direction, furiously seeking for his rival, in order to fight him.

Quails, it must be remembered, are birds that are much given to fighting. In many countries in the East, Quails are bred for fighting, like Cocks in Europe.



THE CRESTED PURPLE HERON.



THE Crested Purple Heron, which is of singular beauty, is common in the western parts of Asia, and is likewise met with, though more sparingly, in several parts of

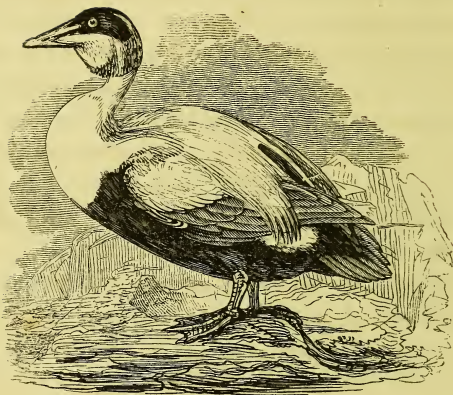
Europe; as on the banks of the Danube, and in the morasses of Holland; and a few specimens have even been killed in England. It is more frequent, however, in Malta, and on the adjacent continent of Africa.

When grown, it stands three feet high, and is almost five feet in the spread of its wings. Its colours are red-green above, and purplish red beneath. The base of its neck is garnished with purplish white feathers; and its shoulders with those of a brilliant red-purple. Its throat is white; its crown is of a black-green; and from this descends a trailing crest of reddish purple.

All the species of Heron are well known as vast devourers of fish, and of the smaller reptiles.



THE EIDER DUCK,



OR EDDER DUCK, called also by several other names, is about double the size of our common Duck, or domesticated Mallard, and weighs six or seven pounds.

This species of Duck is much valued for the light, warm, and elastic down which is called after its name. Two handfuls of this down, if squeezed together, are

sufficient, upon its expansion, to fill a cover resembling a common quilt or blanket. Besides this, their flesh and eggs are valued as food, and their skins are made into warm and durable under garments. They are of great importance to the inhabitants of the shores and islands of the North; where, without being domesticated or even requiring to be fed or taken care of, they yield, during the breeding season, all the advantages of tame poultry.

The Eider Ducks inhabit the high northern latitudes around the globe, during the summer there; but descend more southerly during the northern winter. They are rarely seen in the South of England, but they breed on the coast of Northumberland in June and July.

About Iceland, they usually build their nests upon small islands not far from the shore, and even near the dwellings of the Icelanders, who treat them with much attention and kindness, though they take away their eggs, as we take those of our Hens, and though they also take away the down from their nests, and therefore oblige them to strip themselves for more: for this is the manner in which the down is obtained for use or sale.

The Icelanders, visiting a nest, lift off the mother, and take away portions of the down and eggs, after which they set her upon the nest again; and she is so tame as not only quietly to permit all this, but afterwards to lay more eggs, and cover them with fresh down in the same nest.

The mother plucks this down from her own skin; and when she can afford no more, the Drake comes to her assistance, and covers them with down of his own, which differs from hers in the whiteness of its colour.

When the young ones leave the nest, all the down is carried away by its visitors. Each nest yields about half-a-pound of down in the season; but this is reduced by one half in the cleaning.

Two Eider Ducks will sometimes lay their eggs in the same nest, in which case they always agree remarkably well.

As long as the mother is sitting, the Drake continues upon the watch near the shore; but as soon as the young are hatched, he leaves both the mother and the brood.

The mother remains with her young ones a consider-

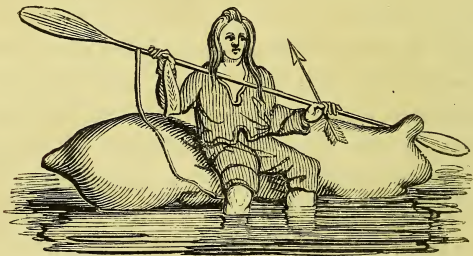
able time ; but this is upon the water, and not in the nest. It is curious to see her lead them out of the latter almost as soon as they have left their egg-shells. Having called to them to follow her to the water's edge, she then calls them till they have all crept together upon her back ; and this they have no sooner done, than she swims out a few yards with them, and then dives, and leaves them upon the surface, to swim for themselves ; and now neither mother nor brood are often seen again upon the shore.

Eider Ducks are very abundant, during the summer, in the Greenland seas ; and are also met with, solitary or in pairs, near the ice, at large distances from land. When near the coast, they fly in large numbers, and generally arrange themselves in a regular form. To see them thus numerous is a sign that land is near. They fly to wide distances in the day time, but generally return to their stations at night. They can fly at the rate of ninety miles an hour.

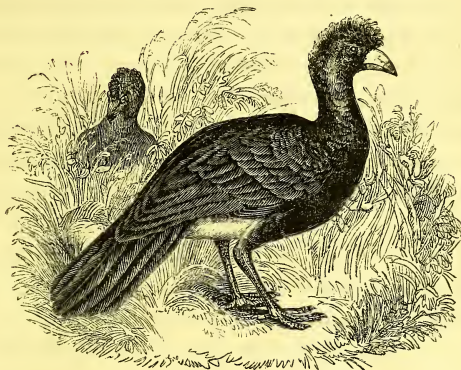
In the spring they swim together in great numbers ; and on a fine day it is very pleasing to see thirty or forty sailing by. Their large size, their showy plumage of

various colours, and the height at which, from the lightness of their bodies, and the thickness of their coverings, they sit upon the water, add to the general gracefulness of their appearance.

The King Duck, with two crests, and of a highly elegant figure is reckoned, by some, a species of the Eider Duck ; but its haunts are still further northward than those of the preceding.



- THE CRESTED CURACOA;



CALLED also Hocco, and the Indian Cock. They are natives of Guiana, Brazil, and Cayenne, as well as of the neighbouring northern parts of South America, where they fill up the natural place of the Turkey, the native of North America ; but they have their name of Curaçoa from that of a small barren island, or rather rock, upon the coast of Venezuela, settled only for commer-

cial purposes, and lying twelve degrees and a half north of the Equator.

The length of the Curaçoa, (for there is really but a single species,) is three feet. The general colour of the body is black, but enlivened with green reflexions. The belly is white, as is often the tip of the tail. The feathers upon the crown of the head, forming the crest, are curled, and of a dark colour. The bird can raise or depress them at pleasure ; and their height varies with its age.

The Curaçoa, of which, after the French, the name is sometimes written Curassou, affords some promise of becoming a new and rich addition to the English poultry-yard ; but there is an obstacle in the dampness of our soil, and especially the dampness of our meadows : this causes their toes to rot away. A Curaçoa in England has been known to lose the whole of one foot, and all but one toe of the other, before it finally expired. In other respects, their flesh is white and delicate, and they readily associate with other fowls.

In the wild state, the Curaçoas are peaceful, harmless, and familiar birds. In Cayenne, in spite of a greater

degree of shyness than before they knew the mischiefs to be dreaded from the colonists, the undomesticated birds have been seen to walk into the streets of the town, and repair to the particular houses where they had become accustomed to receive food.

They live in numerous troops, in the vast forests, and particularly upon the woody mountains. They feed upon the ground, but perch upon the loftiest trees; and build nests of leaves, dry twigs, and stalks of plants. Their eggs are of the size of those of the Turkey, of a pure white, and from two to eight in number.

The pace of the Curaçoa is slow and solemn; its flight heavy and noisy; and its cry hollow, as if kept within the body. Its food is wild fruits and seeds.

THE CALITA PARAKEET.

THE Calitas (pronounced Caleetas) of South America are a beautiful species of Parakeet.

Their size is small, and their general colour is a light, bright and even yellow green. But their heads, shoulders,

and breasts are of a soft silverish grey, except that there is a band of green, dividing at the back the two parts of the grey neck, and giving an edge of green to the top of the head, and even to each cheek. The silver grey of the face is at the same time relieved by a light-chestnut coloured bill, and eyes of a darker chestnut, or almost a red. The quills and secondary feathers of the wings are of an azure blue; and there is the same mixture of light and bright green, and blue, in the long feathers of their tails. Add to this that their whole figure is the most elegant in shape, and the expression of their countenances the most mild; and how can we fancy any description of birds whatever, to be much more beautiful and engaging than the Calitas of South America?

Calita is the name by which they are called in their native country; and from their being much known about the posthouses in the province of Mendoza, the place itself is called Las Calitas, or The Parakeets. They are said to form their nests in holes on the banks of rivers; and it is at least certain that they are most frequently found in places about the rivers Tennyán, Quito, and

others; all of which run in a country of which the level varies from two to three thousand feet above that of the sea. Dr. Gillies, whose account of this bird (previously unknown in England) is printed in Jardine's Illustrations of Ornithology, informs us that he understood them to have from five to six young ones in each nest; and that the little birds are fledged by the month of September.

The people of the country make a practice of robbing the nests, in order to have the young birds for sale. When taken, they keep them in small cages, made of hide or leather, and in which there are three or four holes, each large enough to let the little Calitas put out their heads. Here they are fed with grain, and sometimes with beef, and soon become satisfied with their condition; and an occasional clipping of the wings prevents them from flying away, or being lost, if permitted to come out of their cages.

But it is in their leathern cages, one of which often contains a whole brood, with scarcely room for the birds to move or turn in them, that they are sold to travellers; the whole being, in this manner, very easily carried on a journey. Dr. Gillies has brought more than one

brood to England. Abroad, he fed them with bread soaked in water ; but in England he gives them hemp-seed, or soaked biscuit and sugar. They are very fond of sugar, but they like nothing better than to have the picking of the bone of a chicken, or of any other young fowl.

In a wild state, they fly in flocks ; and even when domesticated, they appear of a very social disposition.

Our author, at the first, had two broods in separate cages ; the one of five, the other four in number. On letting them out of their cages, the first day, to feed and run about, the two broods seemed very shy of each other, and some of them showed an inclination to fight. They soon, however, became friends, and always continued so afterwards.

They knew quite well their respective cages ; were always obedient to the word of command, when desired to go into their own ; but for a long time refused entering that of their neighbour brood.

The two young Calitas which still remain in the author's possession appear much attached to each other, as they evince by many acts of playful kindness. On several occasions, when separated from each other, they

have appeared to be very melancholy ; while, upon meeting again, they expressed their pleasure by a peculiar cry, such as they also sometimes make use of on seeing those to whom they have been long accustomed.

They have been taught to articulate several words ; and when alone, in the forenoon, they seem to go over, as it were, their lesson, commencing with the words they had first learned ; the one repeating the word after the other, but with a more shrill voice. In the presence, however, of strangers, of whom they seem to be always in some dread, they cannot be prevailed upon to speak.

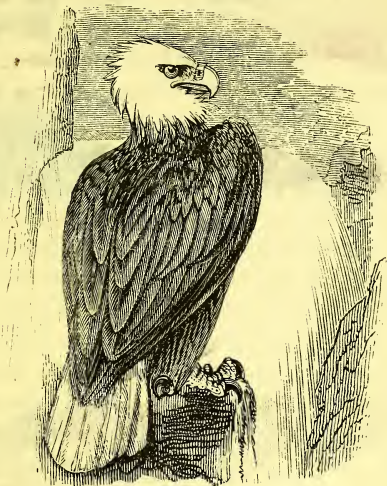
They are greatly terrified at the sight of a Cat. If they only see a Cat outside the window, they make their loudest cries, till somebody comes to them ; after which they seem to regain all their confidence, and to fear nothing from the Cat.

Their affectionate and pretty manners with each other, have caused them to be kept together ; but it seems as if, in spite of the lessons which they practise together, each would speak better were they separated. Upon their being separated once for several

months, one of them spoke nearly the whole of the day throughout that time, and even attempted to imitate part of an air which he had heard played. He continued this for some time after he was permitted to join the other.

Both the Calitas seem remarkably fond of music, listening to it with much apparent pleasure.

THE WHITE-HEADED EAGLE AND THE SWAN.



THE great strength, and daring and cool courage of the White-headed Eagle, joined to his unequalled power of flight, render him highly conspicuous among his brethren of the Falcon race. To these qualities did he

add a generous disposition toward others, he might be looked up to as a model of nobility. The ferocious, overbearing, and tyrannical temper which is ever and anon displaying itself in his actions, is best adapted, nevertheless, to his state ; and was wisely bestowed upon him by his Creator, to enable him to perform the office assigned to him.

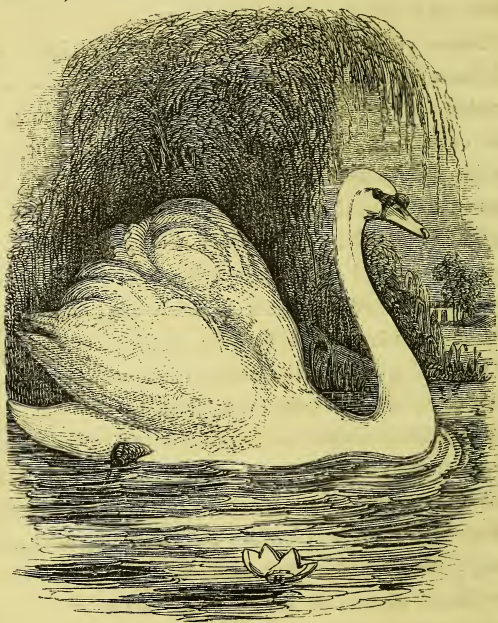
To give some idea of the nature of this bird, permit me to place you on the Mississippi, on which you may float gently along, while approaching winter brings millions of water-fowl, on whistling wings, from the countries of the North, to seek a milder climate in which to sojourn for a season. The Eagle is seen perched, in an erect attitude, on the highest summit of the tallest tree by the margin of the broad stream. His glistening but stern eye looks over the vast expanse. He hearkens attentively to every sound which comes to him from afar ; glancing now and then on the earth, lest even the light tread of the fawn may pass unheard. His mate is perched on the opposite side ; and, should all be tranquil and serene, warns him, by a cry, to continue patient. At this well-known call, the male partly opens his broad wings, inclines his body a little downward,

and answers to her voice in tones not unlike the laugh of a maniac. The next moment, he resumes his erect attitude, and again all around is silent.

Ducks of many species, (the Teal, the Widgeon, the Mallard,) and many other water-fowl, are now seen passing with great rapidity, and following the course of the current; but the Eagle heeds them not: they are at that time beneath his attention. The next moment, however, the wild trumpet-like sound, of the voice of a yet distant but approaching Swan, is heard. A shriek from the Female Eagle comes across the stream;—for, she is fully as alert as her mate. The latter shakes the whole of his body; and, with a few touches of his bill, aided by the action of the muscles of his skin, arranges his plumage in an instant.

The snow-white bird is now in sight. Her long neck is stretched forward, her eye is on the watch, vigilant as that of her enemy; her large wings seem with difficulty to support the weight of her body, although they flap incessantly. So irksome do her exertions seem, that her very legs are spread beneath her tail, to aid her in her flight. She approaches, however. The Eagle has marked her

for his prey. As the Swan is passing the dreaded pair, the male bird, with an awful scream, (that, to the Swan's ear,



brings more terror than the report of the large duck-gun,) starts from his perch, in full preparation for the chase.

Now is the moment to witness the display of the Eagle's powers. He glides through the air like a falling star ; and, like a flash of lightning comes upon the timorous quarry, which now, in agony and despair, seeks, by various manœuvres, to elude the grasp of his cruel talons. It mounts, doubles, and willingly would plunge into the stream, were it not prevented by the Eagle, which, long possessed of the knowledge that by such a stratagem the Swan might escape him, forces it to remain in the air, by attempting to strike it with his talons from beneath.

The hope of escape is soon given up by the Swan. It has already become much weakened, and its strength fails it at the sight of the courage and swiftness of its antagonist. Its last gasp is about to escape, when the ferocious Eagle strikes with its talons the under side of its wing, and forces the bird to fall in a slanting direction upon the nearest shore. It is then that you may see the cruel spirit of this dreaded enemy of the feathered race ; while, exulting over his prey, he, for the first time, breathes at ease ! He presses down his powerful feet, and drives his sharp claws deeper than ever into the

heart of the dying Swan. He shrieks with delight, as he feels the last convulsions of his prey, which has now sunk under his unceasing efforts to render death as painfully felt as it can possibly be ! The female has watched every movement of her mate ; and, if she did not assist in capturing the Swan, it was not from want of will, but merely that she felt full assurance that the power and courage of her lord were quite sufficient for the deed. She now sails to the spot at which he, upon his part, eagerly awaits her ; and, when she has arrived, they together turn the breast of the Swan upward, and gorge themselves with gore * !

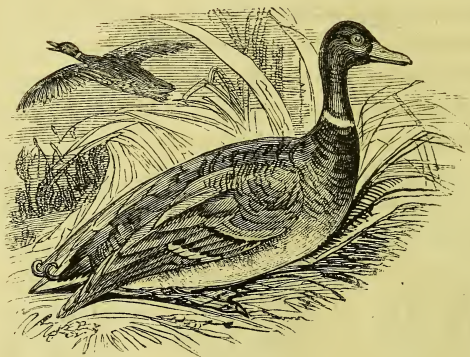
To the foregoing strongly-coloured picture of the treatment given by the Eagle to his prey—the Swan, which is, in comparison with the Eagle, a powerful and warlike bird ; the writer adds, that this species of Eagle does not confine itself to these kinds of food, but greedily devours young pigs, lambs, fawns, poultry, and the putrid flesh of carcasses of every description ; driving off the Vultures and Carrion Crows, and the Dogs, and keeping a whole party at defiance till it is satiated. It frequently, he continues, gives chase to the Vultures,

* See Audubon's Ornithological Biography.

and forces them to disgorge the contents of their stomachs, after which it alights, and devours the filthy mass.



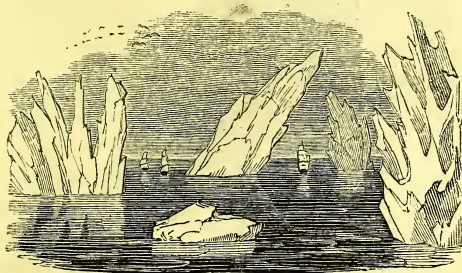
THE MALLARD.



THIS is the species of Duck with which, in a state of domestication, we are all of us so well acquainted. In its wild state, the extent of the globe over which it ranges, and the prodigious numbers in which it is every where found, are circumstances equally remarkable. The whole of the Northern Hemisphere is their country, at least northward as high as Spitzbergen; and

southward as low as Egypt, and in China, and on the Tigris.

In its domesticated state, we know so much of the appearance of this Drake, and of all the Ducks and Ducklings, that I leave you with the picture, and with the information of its peculiar name, and natural species ; and press forward to other birds, of which we have so much more need to learn the history.



THE GREAT BLACK CORMORANT,



OR Corvorant, or Cole Goose, is of the size of a Goose, but more slender in its shape. It is larger than the Green Cormorant, or Shag, called also Crane and Scarf.

The Cormorants walk tolerably well upon the land, and even perch on trees and houses. In walking they use their long and elastic tails as aids in support. They are expert divers, and swim with ease under water.

It is from their *voracity* upon the one hand, as well, perhaps, as from their perching upon trees, and from their black and *crow-like* appearance upon the other, that they have their proper name of *Corvorants* or *voracious crows*.

In the parish of North Mevan, in the island of Shetland, are two very high and inaccessible rocky pillars, upon which Cormorants breed; but what is very remarkable is this, the pillar which the birds choose one year, is always deserted the next, and returned to again upon the following, after a year's solitude. The practice has been observed by the inhabitants from time immemorial.

The smell of the living Cormorant is more rank and offensive than that of any other bird; and though, in Orkney, the flesh of the young Cormorant, after having been buried in the earth for twenty-four hours, in order to sweeten it, is regarded as a delicacy; yet the flesh of the Cormorants in general is so disgusting a food, that

scarcely can the Greenlanders be prevailed upon to taste it. Is it, then, to leave each rock for the space of a year to purify, that the Cormorants of North Mevan change their place of breeding each alternate season?

In winter, Cormorants disperse along the sea-shores, and visit the fresh waters. In swimming, they carry their heads very high, while their bodies seem almost sunk into the water. When they have over-gorged themselves in eating, they are torpid and stupid for a time; but, when this is over, they are again upon the water, and very alert, seeking for more food. It is difficult to shoot them; for, the moment they perceive the flash of a gun, they dive out of its reach, and take care afterwards to keep at a good distance.

Their feathers are not quite impenetrable by water; and they are really in part land birds, or birds that make a link between those of the land and water. But, because of the wetting of their feathers, they never remain from the land for any considerable time; but are frequently seen flying about, or sitting on the shore, flapping the moisture from their wings, or holding them expanded, to dry in the sun and wind.

It is not uncommon to see about a score of these birds together, drying themselves in this manner upon the sea-shore. They remain, sometimes, with their wings expanded, for nearly an hour, without once closing them; but, as soon as the feathers are sufficiently dry to imbibe the oil, they press that liquor from its gland upon the rump, and dress them fully with it.

Formerly, in this country, as is still the case in China, Cormorants were trained for fishing, like Hawks for taking quadrupeds and birds. For that purpose, in England, they were kept with great care in the house; and when taken out to fish, a leathern thong was tied round the throat, to prevent the bird from swallowing its prey. A writer of the time of Charles I. tells us, that he had a *cast* of them, *manned* like hawks, and trained to come to hand. He took much pleasure in them, and thought that the best he had was, one presented to him by Mr. Wood, Master of the Cormorants to the King.

A Cormorant, for some time kept by Colonel Montagu, was extremely docile, of a grateful disposition, and by no means of a savage or vindictive spirit.

The bird was caught by a Newfoundland Dog, which

found it upon the banks of a rivulet that runs into the Bristol Channel ; and as, from the time of year, it was not in its more usual plumage, it was sent to the Colonel as an unknown and curious species.

Having reached that gentleman after a twenty-four hours' journey by coach, every sort of food was offered to it, but it would eat nothing. Even raw flesh was rejected, and no fish could be procured. The Colonel thought himself obliged, therefore, to force some raw flesh down its throat. It received this reluctantly, but without offering any offence from its formidable bill.

The Colonel, after seeing the Cormorant fed, retired to his library, where he was presently surprised by beholding the stranger walk boldly into the room, join him at the fire-side with the utmost familiarity, and commence the task of dressing its feathers !

Being removed to the Colonel's aquatic menagerie, it became restless at the sight of the water ; and was no sooner liberated from the hand, than for a considerable time it plunged and dived incessantly, but without obtaining a single fish. After this, it made no use of the water for three days, convinced, as it seemed, that it contained no fish.

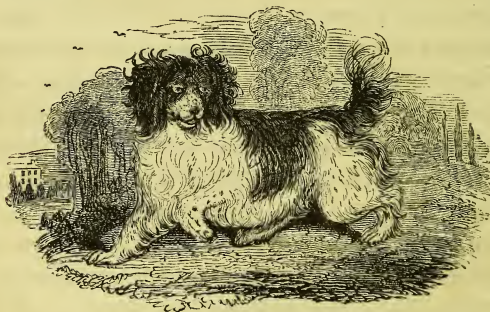
The Cormorant lived in perfect harmony with a Wild Swan, a Goose, several sorts of Ducks, and various other birds ; but to a Gull, with a piece of fish, it would instantly give chase. In doing this, however, it was actuated by nothing but a desire to possess the fish ; for, if the Gull had time to swallow his morsel, the chase was as instantly given up, and no resentment followed. The sight of the fish appeared to induce a wish to be master of it ; but, when the fish had disappeared, the Cormorant thought no more about the Gull.

The dexterity with which the Cormorant seized its prey was almost incredible. If a fish were thrown to a distance into the water, it would instantly dive, pursue the fish under water, in a direct line to the spot where it must fall, never failing to take the fish, and often before it reached the bottom. The quantity which it would swallow in a day was equally astonishing. Three or four pounds of fish, twice in a day, it could readily devour.

In the act of fishing, the Cormorant always carries its head under water, so that it may discover its prey at a greater distance, and with more certainty, than if its eyes were above the surface. If the fish is of a flat

kind, it will turn it in its bill, so as to reverse its natural position ; that is, to set it on edge ; and if, in capturing an eel, which is its favourite fish, it is obliged to take it, at first, in a position unfavourable for swallowing, it will throw it up high into the air, and skilfully catch it in a better position, as it descends.

If Colonel Montagu's Cormorant got out of the menagerie, it never attempted to ramble away, but would walk direct to the house, and enter the first open door, without respect to any one, and regardless even of a Dog ; and was, in short, only troublesomely tame and familiar*.



* See Rennie's edition of Montagu's Ornithological Dictionary.

THE CUCKOO.



TAKING the Old and New Continents together, there are several species of Cuckoo ; but this figure represents that which is the only species in England, and perhaps in all Europe, Asia, and Africa.

The length of this species is fourteen inches ; but of that measure, the tail occupies a considerable share. The body of the bird does not exceed the size of the body of the Turtle Dove.

The plumage, for the most part, is of an ash or blueish

grey colour ; but this is varied into different shades, and parts are black, white, and rufous or reddish brown. In the young birds the whole plumage is so much of a reddish brown, that they have sometimes been called Red Cuckoos, and mistaken for a separate species.

The well-known cry of the Cuckoo is so rich and mellow as to be very delightful, especially as it is always heard in the soft season, and when the flowers are springing. It is a bird of passage, and comes to us early in the spring ; but, according to some writers, always leaves us by the first of July ; the hen birds depart somewhat later, because they stay to finish depositing their eggs. In like manner, the cocks come to us a little earlier than the hens, because they leave the countries they come from, as well as ours when they depart from it, a little earlier than the hens. Other writers assert that the cock Cuckoos remain with us till the middle of September, though they are *silent* after June. Our Cuckoo lives wholly upon insects, and particularly caterpillars ; and of these, especially the hairy sorts. The hen Cuckoo, at no season, makes more than a chattering noise.

A young Cuckoo, taken in the month of July, when it had just acquired the use of its wings, was kept alive, through great care, till the middle of December. For two months after it was caught, it never attempted to feed itself; and even to the last moment of its little life, it seemed to prefer being fed from the hand of its mistress rather than have the trouble of picking up its food, about the nature of which it was extremely choice.

Nothing appeared to be acceptable to the poor nestling, as a substitute for insects, except raw flesh. Flies it would eagerly devour; but its greatest treat was any species of hairy caterpillars, even of the largest kind. Such it seized with avidity, shook them till they were dead, and softened and made them pliant by passing them several times through its bill, before it ate them.

Of strangers it was extremely fearful, fluttering in its cage to avoid their attentions; but it would quietly suffer itself to be caressed by a young lady who had been its kind benefactress, and appeared to like the application of the warmth of her hand to its little cold feet*.

* Rennie's Montagu.

The Common Cuckoo is a shy and solitary bird. It inhabits Europe, Asia, and part of Africa, but is unknown in all America. It has been found as high north as Finmark, and as far east as Kamschatka; that is, at the eastern extremity of the Old Continent.

In Malta and the Greek Islands, where Cuckoos are seen twice a year, as they pass and repass the Mediterranean out of Europe into Africa, they arrive at the same time with the Turtle Doves; and as they are far less numerous than those latter, the natives call them their guides or leaders.

During these migrations, the Cuckoo ceases to be a solitary bird, but associates in flocks of its own species, and even with those of others.

Cuckoos haunt woods and thickets, and seldom alight but upon the branches of trees. When on the ground, they have a hopping march; but this is what seldom happens, for their legs are short, and they seem to have but an indifferent use of them. The young ones, in such situations, scarcely use them at all, but drag themselves along on their bellies, by means of their bills, as Parrots do in climbing.

It is the general opinion, that Cuckoos build no nests, take no care of their young, and even place their eggs in the nests of other birds, and see nothing of their young whatever. But all these things appear to be even yet little understood; and the probability is, (as there are those who still contend), that though some of them happen often, yet they are by no means universal.

It is ascertained that the young ones are at least joined by the old ones after they are able to fly; and that old and young migrate together, at the end of the first season from the nest.

It has also been observed, that where the hen Cuckoo has actually placed her egg (for it is always a single egg) in the nest of another bird, she at least sometimes hovers about that nest while they are hatching and feeding, and recognises them when they take wing.

Yet many extraordinary habits are said to be exhibited by the hen Cuckoo, in relation to this. She always places her egg in the nest of birds much smaller than herself, and sometimes even in nests that, besides being small, are built with roofs, and have no entrances but

very little ones indeed, upon their sides. Into these she is fancied to convey the egg with her bill.

The Cuckoo, as we have seen, lives wholly upon insects ; and the hen bird has the instinct to place her egg in no nest but such as belongs to a bird that has itself the instinct to feed its young with insects!

Many attempts have been made to explain this habit of the Cuckoo by reference to some irresistible, or at least evident, provision of nature. It has been said, that, unlike other birds, the breast of the hen Cuckoo is anatomically so formed that it must be impossible for her to sit upon her egg. This, however, has been proved an anatomical mistake.

Then, it has been said, that the time which the Cuckoos stay with us on their passage is so short, that unless their eggs were hatched, and their young fed, by other birds than themselves, no young Cuckoos could be bred. But this is a mistake also ; for, as just now stated, the parent Cuckoos do not leave us till after their young ones are hatched, fledged, and able to fly away, with themselves, to Spain, Italy, and Africa.

The facts, in the meantime, that follow, and that rest upon the authority of the late distinguished Dr. Jenner, are at present uncontradicted, and even undisputed. They include the declaration of an extraordinary and temporary configuration of the young Cuckoo, such as enables it, during the first twelve days of its life, to throw an egg or young bird, its unwelcome companion, out of the nest; but which configuration, or shape of the back, is changed at the end of the twelve days, and with it the disposition of the young Cuckoo to disturb its companion ! For what it cannot throw out within that time it lives very contentedly with ever after !

It is among the wonders of all this history, that neither the Hedge-Sparrow, (the most usual foster-parent of the young Cuckoo,) nor any other bird, as it may happen, displays the least impatience at the presence of the large egg of the Cuckoo, nor at the inconvenience brought upon its own eggs ; but leaves both to suffer, if it should be so, by the consequences of the intrusion.

It is equally remarkable, that the hen Cuckoo in no manner molests the eggs among which she places her

own ; but leaves their fate entirely to the management of the young Cuckoo, when it shall be hatched.

“While the Hedge-Sparrow,” says Dr. Jenner, “is laying her eggs, which generally occupies four or five days, the Cuckoo contrives to deposit one of her own among them ; an intrusion which is seldom without inconvenience, for the old Sparrow, to make room for it, not only, while sitting, throws out, at intervals, some of her own eggs, but occasionally injures them in such a way that they become addled ; so that, often, not more than two or three of the parent bird’s eggs are hatched, along with the Cuckoo’s ; and, what is very remarkable, it has never been observed that the Sparrow has thrown out or injured this latter !”

When she has sat her usual time, and disengaged the young Cuckoo, and some of her own offspring from their shells, her young ones, and all the eggs that remain unhatched, are soon thrown out ; and the young Cuckoo remains in full possession of the nest, and is the sole object of the future care of the Sparrow !

But, as from Dr. Jenner’s statement appears further, the mode by which the young Cuckoo contrives to get

rid of his companions or incumbrances, is truly curious, and most extraordinarily provided for. Unlike every other newly-hatched bird, its back, from the shoulders downwards, is very broad, and has, at this time, a considerable hollow in the middle, in the nature of a spoon.

Now, by the aid of its rump and wings, it gets the young Sparrow upon its back, where it sinks into the hollow, instead of falling off again, as would happen upon a back of any ordinary shape, and which sinking the young Cuckoo further ensures by aid of its elbows ; after which it pushes backward with its burden, up the side of the nest, till it reaches the top, where it throws it out with a jerk, and sends it falling to the ground ! It treats, also, in the same manner, every unhatched egg ; and, at the performance of each feat, it remains for a little time in the situation where it has thus placed itself ; feels about backward with its wings, to be convinced that it has done its part effectually ; and then drops satisfied to the bottom of the nest !

Dr. Jenner made several experiments upon this subject in different nests, by repeatedly putting in an egg to the young Cuckoo, and every egg was uniformly

disposed of in the same manner. But, (as has been suggested above, and amazing to relate,) by the twelfth day of the young Cuckoo's life, the hollow in its back is filled up, and, at the same time, every disposition of the little bird to this tyranny has ceased*!

A living naturalist confirms the preceding accounts: "Many years ago," says he, "a Cuckoo's egg was brought to me, taken out of a Reed-Sparrow's nest. I immediately put it into the nest of a Swallow which had just begun to sit. On visiting it, about the time that I expected the egg of the Swallow to be hatched, I was surprised to find the young Cuckoo the sole possessor of the nest." This author adds, "I was so fortunate as to have ocular proof of the fact, related by Dr. Jenner, of a young Cuckoo turning out of a Hedge-Sparrow's nest, a young Swallow I had put in for the purpose of experiment. I first saw it when a few days old, in the Hedge-Sparrow's nest, in a garden close to a cottage, the owner of which assured me the Hedge-Sparrow had four eggs when the Cuckoo dropped in a fifth; that on the morning the young Cuckoo was hatched, two young

* See Philosophical Transactions, vol. lxxviii.

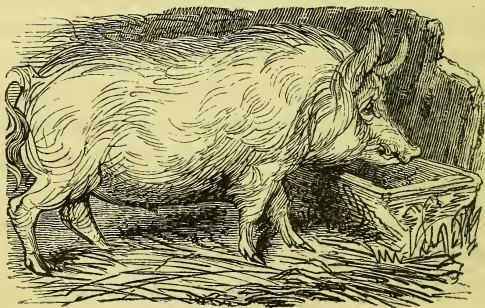
Hedge-Sparrows were also hatched ; and that on his return from his work in the evening, nothing was left in the nest but the Cuckoo !”

“ At five or six days old,” continues our naturalist, “ I took the young Cuckoo to my house, where I frequently saw it throw out the young Swallow for four or five days after. This singular action was performed by its insinuating itself under the Swallow, and with its rump forcing it out of its nest with a sort of jerk. Sometimes, indeed, after much struggling, it failed, by reason of the strength of the Swallow, which was nearly full feathered ; but, after a small respite from the seeming fatigue, it renewed its efforts, and appeared continually restless from its disappointments. But, at the end of the fifth day (the bird was now about twelve days old) this disposition ceased, and it suffered the Swallow to remain with it in the nest, quite undisturbed*.”

Still, in the opinion of another living writer, the universality of this practice in the Cuckoo remains to be proved : “ Considering,” says he, “ the general distri-

* Rennie's Montagu.

bution and the numbers of the Cuckoo, the eggs and young have been very seldom seen; probably not one in a million of birds. When found, it has always been in the nests of other birds, at least in all those of the recorded instances that have been received as properly authenticated. But, before the habit can be considered as universal, there must be greater numbers of young observed, bearing some nearer proportion to the abundance of the old birds, than have yet been found; although the cases recorded appear too frequent to be considered accidental."



AMERICAN CUCKOOS.

THERE is probably no other species of Cuckoo upon the Old Continent, than that of which I have now been speaking to my readers ; for neither of the two species, (if there are two species,) of Honey Birds, or Honey Guides, in the south of Africa, though they have been commonly called Cuckoos, and specifically Honey Cuckoos, seem to have any real pretension to the name.

But when, from the Old Continent, we turn to America, or the New, extraordinary circumstances are related to us. Audubon describes three species of Cuckoo, as observed by him in North America, not one of which deposits its eggs in the nests of other birds ; and in the meantime he gives us an account of another bird, actually belonging to North America, in no respect a Cuckoo, and much smaller than any of the species of Cuckoo in Europe or America ; and which yet has the exact habit of depositing its eggs in the manner of the

European Cuckoo ! This latter bird is called the Cow Bird, or Cow-pen Bird ; but is, at the same time, to be strictly distinguished from one of the species of American Cuckoo, which, though for a very different reason, is sometimes called the Cow Bird also.

The three species of American Cuckoo, described by Audubon, are these :—

1. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo, long known under the name of Carolina Cuckoo, but which migrates through all the country, from the West Indies to the northward.

2. The Black-billed Cuckoo, a rare and very partial visitant of certain portions of North America ; and,

3. The Mangrove Cuckoo, which the naturalist supposes to belong to the Floridas exclusively, and even there to confine itself almost to the islets covered with mangrove-trees.

The species vary from eleven and a half to twelve and a half inches in length, all of them being less than our Cuckoo ; and in these, as in the last, the tail, (which, in its turn, is nearly covered by the long wings), takes up a great part of the length.

But all these species build nests, lay several eggs in each, and nourish their young ; one or all of them raising two broods in the season.

The Mangrove Cuckoo, though very faintly, makes the same cry as our own Cuckoo. The cry of the Black-billed Cuckoo is not mentioned by Audubon ; but that of the Yellow-billed, or Carolina Cuckoo, differs exceedingly. "Early in March," says the naturalist, "these birds resort to the deepest shades of the forests, and intimate their presence by the frequent repetition of their dull and unmusical notes, which are not unlike those of the young Bull-Frog. These notes may be represented by the words 'cow, cow,' repeated eight or ten times with increasing rapidity. In fact, from the resemblance of its notes to those words, this Cuckoo is named *Cow Bird* in nearly every part. The Dutch farmers of Pennsylvania, however, know it better by the name of

RAIN CROW ;

and the French settlers in Louisiana call it Coucou." This species arrives in Pennsylvania from the south

about the end of April, and spreads over the country as far as Lake Ontario. It also breeds in the upper part of Georgia, preferring in all those places the borders of solitary swamps and apple orchards, returning southward again about the middle of September.

THE COW-PEN BIRD

is also said to have its name for a very different reason. It frequents "Cow-pens," or inclosures in which Cows are kept; being always in search of the insects which molest those cattle.

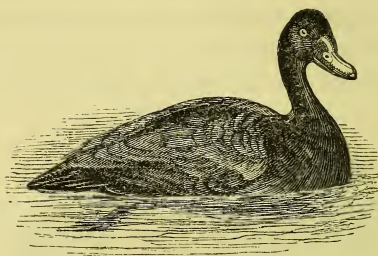
This bird has no external resemblance to any species of Cuckoo. Its tail is short, and its whole length is no more than seven inches. Its general colour is brownish black, but, in parts, with blue and green reflections.

The Cow-pen Bird has no song or note, properly so called, but only utters a low muttering sort of chuckle. It belongs to the genus *Icterus*, which includes with it, in North America, the Crow, the Blackbird, the Red-wing, and the Orchard Oriole.

Yet this bird, and its young one, perform in every particular the parts of the Cuckoo and its young on the Old Continent ; even to the circumstance, that, at the end of the season, the old and young unite, and fly off affectionately together, for their winter's passage. So marvellous and so various are the ways of creation !



THE BLACK DIVER ; OR SCOTER, OR BLACK DUCK.



THIS species of Duck abounds in the North of Europe, Asia, and America; but frequents only the sea and its shores, and seldom flies far up into the country. It is very partial to shell-fish, for which it dives with great vigour and address. It breeds in the Arctic Circle, but migrates southward in the winter, in great flocks.

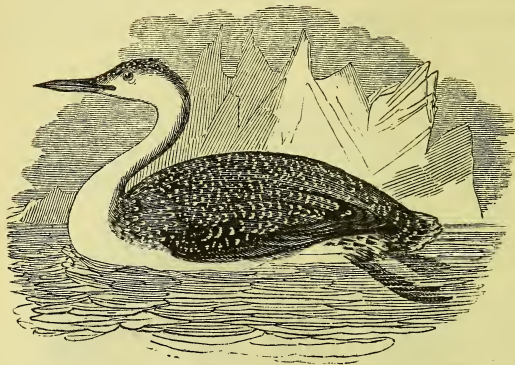
Upon the British shores, it is either less frequent than upon those of France, or else it is less an object of search.

Its fishy flavour induces our countrymen to dislike it as food ; but in Roman Catholic countries, it is much

valued for that very flavour, the people being thence allowed to eat it, as fish, in Lent. For this reason, upon the coast of Picardy, and elsewhere, great numbers are annually caught in the nets which are spread to take them.



THE NORTHERN DIVER;



RED-THROATED Diver, or Loon, or Rain Goose, visits Holland, France, and England, in the winter; and breeds in the Orkney Islands, and all the other cold countries of the Old and New Continents, like the Divers in general.

The male and female are so attached to each other, that if one of them is shot, its companion hovers about

the place for days together, and will sometimes approach so near to the sportsman as to share the fate which it bemoans.

These birds make a howling noise, and sometimes croak ; and the people of the Orkneys, when they hear them, reckon that a storm, or at least rain, is coming. They call them, therefore, Rain Geese.



THE GREAT NORTHERN DIVER.



THE Great Northern Diver (called, also, the Great Loon, and Greatest Speckled Diver, and which has seve-

ral other names) is capable of flying very high ; but it chiefly lives upon the bosom of the sea, where it feeds upon sprats and other small fish ; and where, diving very deep in pursuit of these, it is sometimes taken in the nets, and sometimes with the hooks, of fishermen. Its cry resembles the howl of a dog.

Being easily scared, and diving on the least alarm, it is difficult to shoot.

Its length, when full grown, is nearly two feet and a half ; the spread of its wings is nearly double that measure ; and its weight is from fifteen to sixteen pounds.

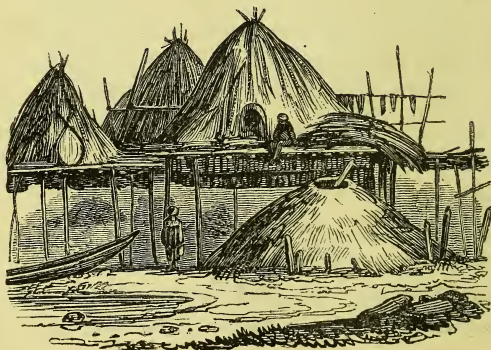
The Great Northern Diver frequents the whole of the Arctic Seas ; and the young ones occasionally visit the inland lakes of Switzerland, Germany, and France ; but, unless in very severe weather, they are rarely seen in England. But they breed about the fresh waters of Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, the Hebrides, and Orkneys ; choosing the most inaccessible places, among reeds and flags, and defending their young ones with so much strength and boldness, as often to make an intruder repent of his undertaking.

Upon land, they can neither walk nor hold themselves

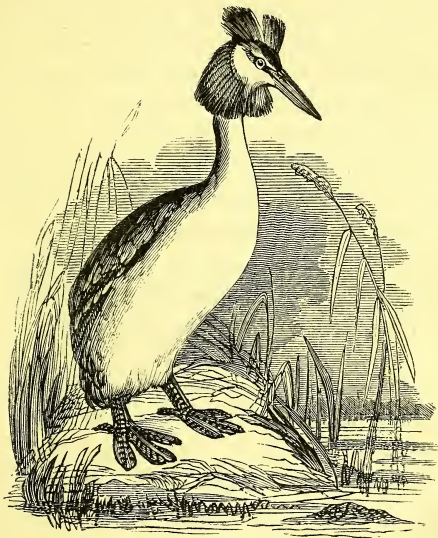
in their erect position, without difficulty ; and here, therefore, they are easily caught.

Besides the warm coating of their plumage, they are defended against the cold of the air and water of these northern regions by a layer of fat, immediately under the skin, of nearly an inch in thickness.

In some northern countries, the skin of this bird, which is tough, and covered with soft down, is tanned, and used for clothing. Among the many names which are given to this bird, is that of Immer Goose, or Ember Goose.



THE GREATER GREBE,



sometimes called the Horned Grebe, in allusion to the two large tufts of reddish feathers which grow above

and behind the eyes, which are supposed to resemble horns. It is a rare bird in England, in its natural state, but it is occasionally kept upon ornamental waters.

The different species of Grebe, or Dabchick, are also called Loons and Gaunts. They belong to very cold countries, and almost live upon or in the water.

Salt water or fresh is equally agreeable to the Dabchicks. By employing their legs as oars, and their wings as fins, they swim rapidly, even under water, and pursue fish to a very considerable depth.

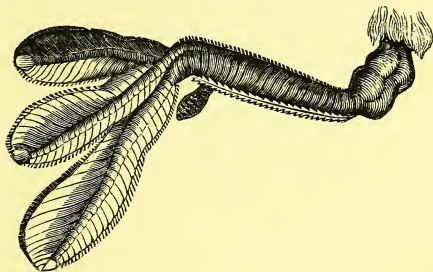
Thus they almost live the lives of fishes, and are even exposed to the same disasters. Fishermen sometimes catch them in their nets, even at the depth of twenty feet.

On land, the structure of their bodies causes them to move awkwardly; but they dive with agility and swiftness.

To avoid being driven upon shore by the wind, when swimming, they swim against it. They live on fish, water-insects and reptiles, and water vegetables, and are usually very fat. Those which frequent the sea, usually breed in the holes of rocks; but those which live upon

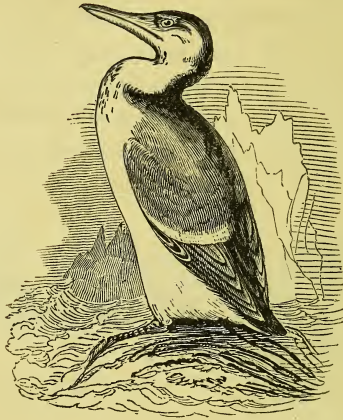
pools and lakes build their nests with rushes, and among the rushes, but so strongly interlaced with their supports, that, though often half sunk in the water, and almost floating, they cannot easily be washed away.

The crown of the head, and the very broad and ample ruff, of the Black and White Dabchick, is of a deep glossy black. The neck and breast are of a bright shining reddish colour, and the under parts of a pure white.



Foot of the Grebe.

THE LESSER GUILLEMOT.



THE Guillemots, like the Divers, are birds of the Arctic or Northern Seas. They are but little fitted for moving upon land, and this they seldom visit, except in breeding time, or when impelled by tempests. They dive with great facility, and swim nimbly under water.

In winter, they migrate southwards, along the coasts of several of the countries of Europe, Asia, and America.

The Lesser, or Foolish Guillemot, which is also called Sea Hen, as well as a number of other names, is from fifteen to seventeen inches in length, and measures twenty-seven inches and a-half across its expanded wings. In winter it migrates, in large flocks, to the coasts of Norway, the Baltic, Holland, France, and Great Britain; and is sometimes met with upon the inland lakes of Europe.

It arrives at St. Kilda about the middle of February, and is there looked upon as the harbinger of plenty. In Orkney they continue throughout the winter.

The Foolish or Lesser Guillemot lays but one egg, which is very large, unprotected by any nest, and so slightly supported by the ledge of rock which receives it, that when the birds are surprised, and fly off suddenly, many of their eggs tumble into the sea. The eggs are beautifully variegated with black, white, blue, and green; and scarcely any two of them resemble each other.

But, in places where these birds are seldom molested,

it is difficult to put them to flight ; and some of them may be taken by the hand, while others flounder into the water, making but little use of their wings.

At night, in the remote island of St. Kilda, a rock-man (as he is called) will descend, by the help of a rope, to the ledge of a precipice, upon which he fixes himself ; and where, tying round him a piece of white linen, he waits the approach of the bird ; and the latter, mistaking the white linen for a part of the white rock, alights upon it, and is immediately killed. So much for the Foolish Guillem, or Guillemot.

The Black, or Spotted Guillemot, is smaller than that which is commonly called the Lesser Guillemot ; and has the further names of Sea Turtle, and Greenland Dove, besides many more. It measures only thirteen inches in length.

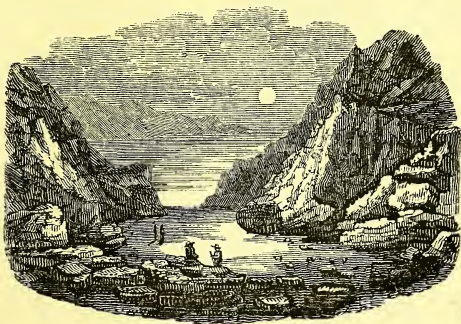
The little Auk, or Little Greenland Dove, Sea Turtle, or Ice-bird, is smaller still. Myriads of these birds are to be met with, at their season, in the Arctic Seas.

But the names Greenland Dove and Sea Turtle, given to the Black or Spotted Guillemot, are doubtless to

be derived from the Turtle or Dove-like manner in which they are usually seen flying in pairs.

The female Guillemots rarely quit the nest while sitting; the males feeding them all the time with sprats and other small fish.

This habit, along with the nature of the places where they breed, explains why they build no nests, and why they trust their eggs upon ledges where there is so much danger; for, as we now see, both the warmth and safety of the eggs are carefully provided for by the constant sitting of the mother!



THE FLAMINGO.



THE Flamingo, when in full plumage, which is not

till its fourth year, has the head, neck, tail, and under parts of a beautiful rose red ; the wings of a vivid or scarlet red ; the back, and the scapulars, or shoulder feathers of the wing, rose-red ; and the legs rosy or roseaceous ; but the quill feathers are a deep black. It is from its red colour that the bird is called Flamingo, or flame-coloured.

Flamingos are found in the warmer latitudes of both the continents. They are common upon the coasts of Africa, and are seen on the coasts of Spain, Italy, and France, and in the Mediterranean.

These beautiful birds were held in high estimation by the ancient Romans, who often used them in their sacrifices, and at their splendid entertainments.

Except in the pairing season, they are usually met with in large flocks ; and appear, at a distance, like a regiment of soldiers, all of them being often arranged in file, (or alongside of one another,) on the borders of rivers, where they feed upon fish, aquatic reptiles, and insects.

When Europeans first visited America, they found the Flamingo upon the swampy shores, quite tame, gentle,

and in nowise distrustful of mankind. When one of them was shot, the rest of the flock, instead of attempting to fly away, only regarded the fate of their companion with a sort of fixed astonishment ; so that the whole flock, one by one, were often killed, without any of them trying to escape.

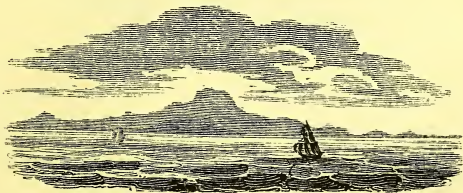
But the experience of these misfortunes has since made them extremely shy ; and now they never feed without first planting a sentinel. The sentinel, the moment that he perceives the least danger, utters a loud cry, like the sound of a trumpet ; and immediately the whole are upon the wing, each repeating the cry to his fellows, so that the air is filled with their clamour. The flock, in flying, has a leader first, and forms a triangular body, like a flock of wild geese.

Flamingos, like all other birds of the Stork or Crane kind, sleep standing upon one leg, the other being drawn up under the feathers of its body, apparently for warmth ; while the head, and especially the bill, in this, as in all, or nearly all other birds, from the same desire of warmth, are placed under the wing. The grown Flamingo stands six feet high, or upwards ; but, of that

stature, the greater part belongs to its legs, the body being scarcely so big as that of a Goose.

With legs thus extraordinarily long, but which are given for the purpose of wading, or walking in the water, our little readers will not be surprised that the Flamingo, though it cannot fly till it is full grown, can run wonderfully fast, let it be ever so young.

In spite, nevertheless, of their running, the young ones are sometimes taken ; when, though, because they pine for their proper food and mode of life, it is difficult finally to rear them, they are easily tamed, and in five or six days become familiar ; eating from the hand, and drinking freely of sea-water.



THE EGRET, OR SNOWY HERON.



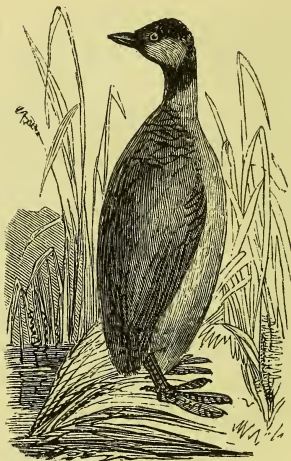
THIS beautiful little bird appears to have been formerly common in England. At present, it is found in many parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, as far south as the West India Islands. It roosts, at evening, in the trees.

The plumes of the Egret were formerly employed to decorate the helmets of European warriors, and they are still the ornaments of the head-dresses of ladies, and of the turbans of the Turks and Persians. Imitations of their figure, set with diamonds, are called, after them, *egrets*.

The length of a full grown Egret is only one foot, and its weight one pound. The plumage of the whole bird is a snowy white ; but its bill is black, and its legs greenish. Its forehead is crested, and the feathers of the lower part of the neck are long and silky.

They are easily tamed ; and in their natural state they are more sociable than some of the other species of Heron, and readily live among different kinds of birds.

THE LESSER GREBE, OR DABCHICK.



THE length of this bird is from nine to ten inches, and its weight seven ounces.

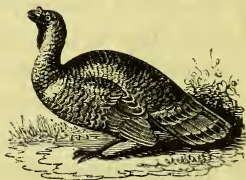
It is most common in southern latitudes, as those of the Philippine Islands, and Lower Egypt. It has been seen, however, so far northward as the Hebrides.

It seldom quits the water, and is a remarkable diver ; but, to build its nest, it employs aquatic plants to the thickness of a foot, in the midst of the waters, but fastened to the reeds or flags. It lays four or five eggs, and always covers them when it leaves them.

A French naturalist kept a Little Grebe for some time, providing it with a tub of water for swimming and diving. It was content to live on the refuse of fruit, (a food so very opposite to its usual prey of fish), and was cheerful and familiar, and would amuse the spectators with its diving feats.

One unlucky day, however, the poor Little Grebe strayed beyond its bounds, and seemed disposed to take its departure ; upon which its owner caused it to be killed, and having stuffed its skin, placed the latter in his museum.

WILD TURKEYS.



It seems difficult to understand how the bird, of which Turkey is the English name, came to be so called. With the French it is the Coq d'Inde, or (from Coq d'Inde) it is Dindon, meaning, by either name the Indian Cock ; and by "Indian," we are here to understand *Spanish* India, or the *West* Indies ; and, by these, not the West Indies so called by the English ; that is, the *American* or *West India Islands* ; but the whole of *America*, as that continent and its islands were first known to the Spaniards ; and which compose the *West* Indies of Spanish authors, and *Les Indes Occidentales* of

French. Be the origin, however, of the popularly and ornithological name of Turkey what it may, the bird is no native of *Turkey*, as its name might lead us to suppose, nor of any part of the Ancient Continent ; but exclusively of the New Continent, or America, and this in its Northern subdivision.

In the United States of North America, M. Audubon describes the wild Turkey as at present chiefly subsisting in the vast unsettled parts of the country of the Mississippi and Missouri, from the Allegany Mountains westward ; and limits the scenes of his own particular acquaintance with the bird, to Kentucky and Louisiana.

“The Turkey,” says that admirable naturalist, “is irregularly migratory, as well as irregularly gregarious ;”—that is, it migrates, or from time to time changes the tracts of country through which it seeks its food, but not with regularity, according to the seasons, like the Swallow, and so many other birds ; and again, it is sometimes found in large flocks, sometimes in small ones, and sometimes in no more than single families ; or, rather, a hen Turkey only, and her brood. Whenever the quantity of food obtainable in one portion of the country

happens to exceed that in another, the Turkeys are insensibly led toward that spot, by gradually meeting in their haunts with more fruit *.

In a general way, in the meantime, Turkeys cluck to each other at the sight of food, the nearer they advance towards the place where it is most plentiful. In this manner flock follows after flock, until one district is entirely deserted, while another is, as it were, overflowed by them.

About the beginning of October, when scarcely any of the seeds and fruits have yet fallen from the trees, these birds assemble in flocks, and gradually move toward the rich bottom lands of the Ohio and Mississippi. The Turkey-cocks associate in parties of from ten to a hundred, and search for food separately from the hen†, while the latter are seen either advancing singly, each with her brood of young, then about two-thirds grown ;

* Fruit, commonly so called, including grapes, as well as beech-mast, berries, and all other productions of the forest.

† How strong a contrast to this, to the gallantry of the barndoor cock, who no sooner finds any thing eatable, than he calls, in the most eager manner, all his hens around him.

or, in connexion with other families, forming parties often amounting to seventy or eighty birds, all intent upon shunning the old cocks, who, even when the young ones have only attained this size, will fight with them, and often destroy them, by repeated blows on the head. Old and young, however, all move in the same course, and on foot, unless their progress be interrupted by a river, or the hunter's dog force them to take wing.

TURKEYS CROSSING A RIVER.

“When they come upon a river, they betake themselves to the highest eminences by which it is overlooked, and often remain upon them a whole day, and sometimes two days, as if for the purpose of consultation. During this time, the cocks are heard gobbling, calling, and making much ado with their voices; and are strutting about, as if to raise their courage to a pitch fitting the emergency. Even the hens and young ones assume something of the same pompous demeanour, spread out

their tails, and *purr* loudly, performing extravagant leaps. At length, when the weather appears settled, and all around is quiet, the whole party mounts to the tops of the highest trees, whence, at a signal, consisting in a single cluck, given by a leader, the flock takes flight for the opposite shore. The old and fat birds easily get over, even should the river be a mile in breadth; but the younger and less robust frequently fall into the water—not, however, to be drowned, as might be imagined! In the event of such a misfortune, these bring their wings close to their bodies, spread out their tail as a support, stretch forward the neck, and striking out their legs with great vigour, proceed rapidly toward the shore; on approaching which, should they find it too steep for landing, they cease their exertions for a few moments, float down the stream until they come to an accessible part, and, by a violent effort, generally extricate themselves from the water. It is remarkable, that immediately after thus crossing a large stream, they ramble about, for some time, as if bewildered; and, in this state, they fall an easy prey to the hunter.”

Thus far M. Audubon:—but it may be interesting,

here, to consider the *reason* of all the peculiarities observable in this very striking description of the passage of a river by a flock of Turkeys.

Here are birds, principally adapted to travel and seek their food upon dry land, and upon foot, and yet capable, on emergencies, of a certain success both in flying and swimming. For the purpose of enabling them to forage and travel much on foot, they are provided with long, strong, and heavy legs, and are but little encumbered with wings.

Finding their march interrupted by the course of a river, they retread their steps, if needful, to the tops of the nearest and highest eminences which overlook it ; but this not, as we shall presently, perhaps, conclude, so much (though doubtless in part) to survey the breadth that is to be crossed over, and the kind of shore on the other side, as to gain a height from which, in an oblique direction, and taking every advantage from the nature of the surface before them, to *descend* in the direction they desire ; an object which, as we have seen, they still further pursue—first, by gaining, before the final flight, the tops of even the highest trees upon these highest

eminences. Birds, whose bodies are comparatively lighter ; that is, those which have comparatively larger and stronger wings, begin their flight by springing *upward* into the air ; but these Turkeys, as we now see, set about theirs by sinking *downward*, through the air, toward the earth. The flight of the first is upon the principle of the *ascent* of a balloon ; the flight of the second, upon that of the *descent* of a parachute ; though the descent of the flock of Turkeys is not intended to be perpendicular, or at random, with the wind, like that of a parachute from the car of a balloon, or from the top of a tower or steeple, (which would bring them down, either exactly at the spot which they were endeavouring to get beyond, or else at some uncertain spot, before or behind, or in the midst of the river,) but slantingly or obliquely, upon the opposite side of the stream. The aim of lighter birds is, to make use of the air for *rising*, though obliquely, either into its own higher regions, or on their way to another spot upon the earth ; but the aim of the Turkeys is, to use the same air as a prop upon which to *fall* or *descend*, but obliquely, or in advance of the spot from which they fly !

A second point embraces, at one view, the *delay*, the *cries*, and the *bodily gestures* and *movements* in which they indulge before the commencement of their flight. One object of all this must be, the desire that, at the moment of action, when it shall arrive, the whole flock shall act in unison; an object of which other notice remains to be taken, but which could be gained only by this delay—this preparation—this understanding that the great feat is not to be attempted till the whole are ready; till stragglers are collected; and till signals are made. But in what manner is the interval passed, and for what purpose is it even prolonged? In calling into use, and in exercising, in order to strengthen and increase the aptitude of employment, the dormant bodily powers of the birds, which, though possessed, are but little, if at all, at other times employed; in proud displays, and in stimulating examples of bodily strength and activity; and in haughty, and perhaps boastful, but also encouraging and stimulating cries, and tones of voice, adapted to awaken the courage, and kindle the ardour, as well of the birds that utter them, as of those that hear them; a communion and

communication of feeling, and mutual excitement to the act of beginning an enterprize somewhat arduous, somewhat dangerous, somewhat out of the course of a Turkey's daily life; and yet necessary to be met and carried through, in behalf both of his welfare and subsistence; for, while before him is a plentiful country, full of the richest gleanings, behind him is one which is more or less exhausted. In a word the whole of this delay, and these preparations, remind us of every thing which men themselves are daily doing in corresponding circumstances—either for labour, for battle, or for festive recreation. Here is *time* for preparation, in the first place; here is exercise, both for self-confidence, and for the admiration of others; drill; trial of strength; boasts of capacity; tests of the daring invitations to the timid; offerings of example; approbation of fellows; commendations of brother workmen; shouts of bystanders; drums and fifes for the adventurous aëronauts:—in a word, we have here one of the many instances for which, one by one, all the habits of human life, and mental resources, in human action, not less than the practice of all human

arts in the working of materials, is anticipated among the inferior part of the animal creation.

Let us, however, consider next, the motive for taking care, that the final flight shall be made, not by single families, or small parties. This is an affair for company. It is here the more the merrier. The principle is that of mutual assistance, of social co-operation. The principle, further, is a principle of mechanics. It belongs to the law of projectiles. It is the principle upon which we are able to throw a stone with greater swiftness, and a surer aim, than a lighter substance ; the principle upon which we can project a cannon ball to a greater distance than a small shot. The mass of the projectile weight, against the mass of the resistance. The direction of the flight is that of *descent* ; but the descent is through no vacuum—through no *empty space*, nor even through an unresisting or weak medium. Between the tops of the highest trees of the highest eminences upon this side of the river, and the low and verdant banks upon the other, there is a vast *flood of air*—an immense *bath of liquid atmosphere*—into which the birds are to *plunge*, and through which they must, as it were, *swim*, before their

feet can again tread on ground; the elemental body all the while oppressing and wearying internally the action of their lungs, their heart, and the whole system of their blood-vessels and nerves; as much as, externally, it opposes and wearies the action of their wings, and through the muscles of their wings, all the muscles of their bodies. But how, then, is this difficulty to be lessened? The greatest possible amount of this great body of air is to be displaced. The great buoyancy, or density, or upward action of the air, is to be met by the great weight, the density, the alacrity in sinking, "of the united body of the flock of Turkeys." It is not to be the effort of a single Turkey, or of a few of the number, one at a time, or time after time, that must oppose, unaided, the whole resistance—must penetrate the whole mass, of this great flood, with all its waves of circum-ambient *air*, beneath which the feathered travellers are to dive; but the united flock, by means of its united weight, is to lessen, to each bird, in proportion to the magnitude of the flock, the resistance to be encountered in the descent. We see, here, the reason, also, why Swallows, Pigeons, Ducks, Geese, and other birds of

passage, always travel in large flocks, thus lessening, to each bird, the resistance of the air, whether the direction be upward, downward, aslant, or horizontal ; and there wants, to M. Audubon's account of these flights of Turkeys, but the additional statements, (if applicable,) that the flock, beginning with the leader mentioned, widens, wedgeshaped, toward its rear, and that the younger or weaker birds have their place in the midst, and in the hinder part, (for in both those parts, the aërial resistance must be smallest, and even an *assisting* stream of air created,) to create our marvel at the whole delightful narrative, and to give this proceeding of the Turkeys a still closer resemblance to the corresponding ones of other living creatures. What confirms all that has been now said, is the representation which the author gives us, that the chief difficulties of the descent are experienced by the youngest and the leanest, that is, (as to both of those,) the *lightest* birds ; for it is thus that we are further led to see, that it is the *weight* of the whole flock for the whole flock, as well as the weight of each single bird for each single bird, which facilitates the *descent*, by overcoming the resistance ; while, as to the state of un-

prepared ability, in which those younger or leaner birds discover themselves to be, both to swim, if they encounter the accident of falling into the water, and to invent new resources, if the edge of the water, when swum to, is found too steep for their landing ; these things only exalt still higher our admiration of the whole natural economy displayed !

Finally, the state of temporary bewilderment in which our author describes the Turkeys as at last regaining their feet, will explain itself to us by our simply recollecting, once more, that the birds have been taking an *air bath* ; that they have but just completed the *plunge* ; and that their lungs, their heart, their brain (to say nothing of their muscular fatigue), are all still affected by the force of the air upon the first, and by the driving of the blood from the heart, and by the driving of the same blood upon the brain ! What follows, or what accompanies all these disordered functions, and the state and situation of the great vital fluid, is doubtless, in the case of the Turkeys, (while in, and for some time after being out, of their air-bath, or of the sea or flood of air into which they have plunged, and through which they have

dived;) the same as all of us experience from the act of diving, or of plunging into water, or even, though in slighter degree, from running or walking up or down hill, or against the violence of a wind.

But once more, who can close the contemplation of this account, either in the whole, or in any part, without the experience of fresh *amazement*—amazement not unakin to the “bewilderment” of the alighted Turkeys; at the present display (to be added to so many others) of the wonderful arrangements and adaptations prepared and established through universal nature!

TURKEY-PENS.

WE are not, here, to talk of the *pens* that are made of Turkey’s quills; but of the pens, pins, pinds, pounds, cages, or enclosures—or, in plain English, *traps*—that are set in America for the capture of Wild Turkeys, which seem prepared for so many troubles that are natural, but for so few that are artificial. And here we are to find a new example of a feature in the animal creation, not less familiar, and not less striking, than any of those which we have just now remarked upon; namely,

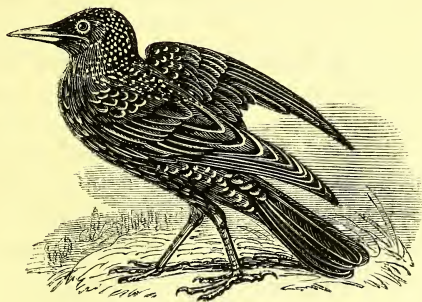
that if, while such creatures are engaged in contesting with difficulties opposed to them by nature only, we look upon their resources and their triumphs with a wonder perpetually increasing, at their *sagacity and subtlety*; it often happens, that when opposed but by the simplest contrivances of human art, the novelty of their situation wholly overpowers them, and leaves us in equal surprise at their *folly and simplicity*!

“The most common method,” says M. Audubon, “of procuring Wild Turkeys, is by means of *pens*. These are placed in parts of the woods where Turkeys have been observed to roost, and are constructed in the following manner. Young trees, of four or five inches diameter, are cut down, and divided into pieces of the length of twelve or fourteen feet. Two of these are laid on the ground parallel to each other, at a distance of ten or twelve feet. Two other pieces are laid across the ends of these, at right angles to them; and in this manner successive layers are added, until the fabric is raised to the height of about four feet. It is then covered with similar pieces of wood, placed three or four inches apart, and loaded with one or two heavy logs, to

render the whole firm. This done, a trench, about eighteen inches in depth and width, is cut under one side of the *cage*, into which it opens slantingly, and rather abruptly. It is continued, on the outside of the cage, to some distance, so as gradually to attain the level of the surrounding ground. Over the part of this trench within the pen, and close to the wall, some sticks are placed, so as to form a kind of bridge, about a foot in breadth. The trap being now finished, the owner places a quantity of Indian corn in the centre, as well as in the trench ; and, as he walks off, drops, here and there, a few grains in the woods, sometimes to the distance of a mile. This is repeated at every visit to the trap, after the Turkeys have found it. Sometimes, two trenches are cut ; in which case the trenches enter on opposite sides of the trap, and both are strewn with corn. No sooner has a Turkey discovered the train of corn, than it communicates the circumstance to the flock by a cluck ; when all of them come up, and searching for the grains scattered about, at length come upon the trench, which they follow, squeezing themselves one after another through the passage under the bridge. In this manner

sometimes the whole flock enters ; but more commonly six or seven only, as they are alarmed by the least noise ; even the cracking of a tree in frosty weather. Those within, having gorged themselves, raise their heads, and try to force their way through the top or sides of the pen, passing and repassing on the bridge, but never for a moment *looking down*, or attempting to escape *through the passage by which they entered!* Thus they remain, till the owner of the trap, arriving, closes the trench, and secures his captives. I have heard of eighteen Turkeys being caught in this manner at a single visit to the trap. I have many of these pens myself, but never found more than seven in them at a time. One winter, I kept an account of a produce of a pen which I visited daily, and found that seventy-six had been caught in it, in about two months. Where either Wolves or Lynxes are numerous, the prize is apt to be secured before the owner of the trap arrives. One morning, I had the pleasure of securing in one of my Turkey-pens a fine Black Wolf.

THE STARLING.



THE Starlings are birds of which my little readers have often heard. Sterne's story of the Starling which said, "I can't get out," has made them to be very frequently talked of.

Starlings are eight inches and a half in length ; but, of this measure, two inches and a half belong to their tails, and one to their bills ; so that they are but small birds.

All their plumage is of a blackish hue, changing to

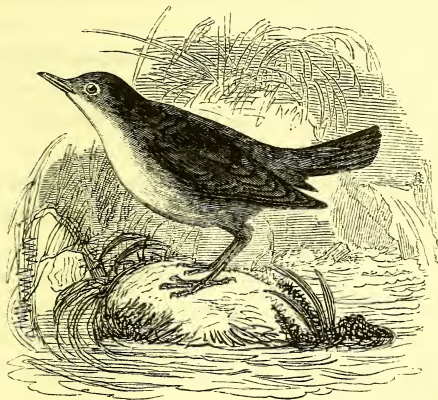
purple toward their breasts ; but as their feathers are everywhere tipped, either with a light rusty red, or with a reddish white, they have a general speckled appearance.

The Starling, says a naturalist, becomes wonderfully familiar in the house. Docile and cunning like a dog, he is always gay, wakeful, soon knows the entire family, remarks the motions and air of each, and adapts himself to their humours. In his solemn tottering step, he appears to go stupidly forward ; but nothing escapes his eye. Without having his tongue cut, as is sometimes cruelly practised, he readily learns the pronounciation of words ; thus showing the needlessness of the barbarous operation. Both cock and hen repeat correctly the tunes which they are taught ; as well as the cries of men and animals, and the songs of all the birds that they can hear.

Starlings are very uncertain, however, as to what they do. They forget as fast as they learn, or mix up old and new in great confusion. Upon the other hand, not only the young, but the old also, are very ready to receive instruction, and speedily profit by every thing which they are taught.

THE WATER RAIL.

STARLINGS often fight great battles among themselves, killing hundreds of their flocks ; yet they can also live upon very friendly terms with each other, and even with birds of other species. The following example occurs



in an account of a tame Water Rail, or Spotted Water Hen, once belonging to a gentleman in Germany.

The Water Rail, at the least sign from his master, would lie down flat upon the ground, so motionless that it might easily have been trod upon and crushed. At other times, however, and during daylight, it would run about very swiftly, and escape from the hand like an eel. It is a bird about the size of a Quail ; and, in a natural state, leads a solitary life, among the reeds and rushes by the sides of rivers, lakes and ponds.

It often bathed, getting into troughs where the water was deeper than the breadth of four fingers ; after which it would lie down on the sand, upon its side, like poultry.

Its note, which it seldom uttered, was a long "sig ;" and it could also make another and rather loud noise, very similar to the yelping of puppies.

It had been caught in the winter, in a noose ; but, after living five years in the house, tumours came upon its feet, and it could scarcely walk. Finally, it was killed by a Hedge-hog, which got into its little box one night.

It seldom flew ; and, when it did so, always flew silently.

Its natural habit appeared to be that of moving about by night, and especially by moonlight. It was always wakeful during the night, and especially when the moon shone brightly.

It never quarrelled with the other tame birds which the gentleman possessed; and it formed a particular friendship with a Starling, which was friendly to it in return. It would lay itself down before the Starling, for the latter to pick and arrange its feathers.

THE AMERICAN ROBIN.

EUROPEANS, when they meet with any new plant or animal in countries abroad, are very apt to call them by the names of plants or animals of Europe which they resemble in any degree whatever.

There is no Robin Redbreast in America; but there is a species of Thrush, peculiar to that country, which has a reddish orange-coloured breast, and of which many of the habits are a good deal like those of the real Robin Redbreast.

A more distinguishing name of the American bird, is that of Migratory Thrush. It is almost double the

size of the Robin Redbreast ; the latter being no more than five inches and three quarters long, of which measure the tail has two and a quarter ; while the Migratory Thrush is ten inches long, and the spread of its wings fourteen. Instead, also, of being of a general olive-colour throughout its plumage ; its general colour is grey.

It is remarkable, in the meantime, that both birds are partly migratory, and partly stationary. In England, the Robin Redbreasts never leave the country ; while, in all parts of continental Europe, they migrate from one country to another, according as the seasons vary. In North America as well, the Migratory Thrush lives all the year in the southern countries ; while such of its species as migrate to the northward in the summer, migrate to the southward in the winter*.

In respect of song, the American Robin, so called, appears to remind travellers of the English Blackbird, but not at all of the English Robin.

* See Burford Cottage, and its Robin Redbreast. By the Author of Keeper's Travels.

“So much,” says M. Audubon, “do certain notes of the American Robin resemble those of the European Blackbird, that frequently, while in England, the cry of the latter, while it flew hurriedly from off a hedge-row, reminded me of that of the former when similarly surprised; and, while in America, the American Robin has in the same manner recalled the Blackbird to my recollection.”

My readers know that the Blackbird is a species of Thrush. The Migratory Thrush is a large bird of its kind. There is no Blackbird in America.

The Migratory Thrush, or American Robin, is found in the cold regions of Labrador, as well as in the warm ones of the two Carolinas.

These birds experience two very opposite sorts of treatment in America. When they are in season for eating, they are killed and brought to market in great numbers; but, at other times, they are somewhat venerated, like the Robin Redbreast in Europe.

These American Robins (thus to call them) are not so familiar as to enter the houses, and feed in the midst of a family, like the Redbreasts of the old Continent; but

they often build fearlessly on the outsides of houses, and in situations of that kind, where even much noise and bustle is daily going forward. A nest has been seen in the timbers of an unfinished vessel, upon which the carpenters were constantly at work. Another was built within a few yards of a blacksmith's anvil.

Children are very seldom known to trouble the nests of the American Robin ; but the poor bird has enemies of another kind to dread ; and it appears, that for this reason, it sometimes builds in very extraordinary places. A nest has been known in the timbers placed to support the sides of a well, at a depth of seven or eight feet below the surface.

The enemy dreaded is the Cuckoo, of which birds there are three species in America. But the American Cuckoos have very different habits from those of the species of the Old Continent. They rear their own young tenderly ; but they suck the eggs which they find in the nests of other birds.

The young of the American Robin are fed with anxious care by their tender parents, who, should any person intrude upon them, boldly remonstrate, pass and

repass by rapid divings, or, moving along the branches, jerk their wings and tail violently, and utter a peculiar and shrill note, evincing their anxiety and displeasure. If you are so cruel as to carry off their young, they follow you to a considerable distance, and are joined, in this time of their affliction, by other individuals of their species.

The young, before they are fully fledged, often leave the nest, to meet their parents, when the latter are coming home with a supply of food.

Many of these birds show a marked partiality to the places they have chosen to breed in, and (among those that escape death in the winter,) return to those loved spots at each succeeding spring. Wherever the nest is placed, it is large, and well secured.

“Whenever the sun shines warmly over the earth, the old males,” says M. Audubon, “tune their pipes, and enliven the neighbourhood with their song. The young also begin to sing; and all the birds, both young and old, are musical before they begin their migrations to the northward. By the 10th of April, they have reached the Middle Districts. The blossoms of the dogwood

are then peeping forth in every part of the budding forests; the fragrant sassafras, the red flowers of the maple, and hundreds of other plants, have already banished the dismal appearance of winter. The snows are all melting away; and Nature, again in all the beauty of spring, promises happiness and abundance to the whole animal creation."

Then it is that the American Robin, perched upon a fence-stake, or the top of some detached tree of the field, gives a loose to his sweet song.

His lays are modest, lively, and often of considerable power; and their vivacity and simplicity never fail to fill the breast of the listener with pleasing sensations. Every one knows this Robin, or this Thrush, by his song; and, excepting in the shooting season, he is cherished by old and young, and protected by all with anxiety and care.

FLIGHT OF THE AMERICAN ROBIN.

THE flight of these birds is swift. At times it is very high in the air, and it is always capable of being persevered

in for a considerable time. During the periods of their migrations, which occur irregularly, because depending upon the plenty or scarcity of food, and upon the severity or mildness of the weather, they move in scattered flocks, over spaces of several hundred miles at once, and at a considerable height. From time to time, a few shrill notes are heard, from different individuals in the flock. If the weather is calm, their movements are continued during the night; and, at such seasons, the whistling noise of their wings is often heard.

During heavy falls of snow, or severe gales, they pitch downward toward the earth, or take shelter in the woods, remaining there till the weather becomes more favourable.

They not unfrequently disappear for several days, from a place where they have been seen in thousands, and again return in similar numbers.

There is another bird in North America, wholly different from the preceding, which has received the name of Robin *Redbreast*; but it is also called the Blue Bird.

SWALLOWS.

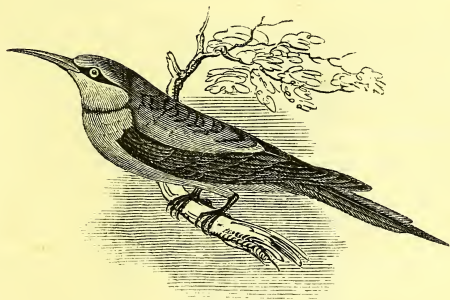
THERE are four species of birds of passage which visit England, and with all, or at least with most of which, my young readers are very well acquainted ; though, in spite of their real and great differences, I suspect that they hardly distinguish them from each other. In truth, the common name of all is Swallow ; and even from the learned, though with epithets of distinction, they have each the one name *Hirundo*.

The four species of Swallow are,—

1. The Swallow properly so called ;
2. The Swift ;
3. The House Martin ;
4. The Sand Martin.

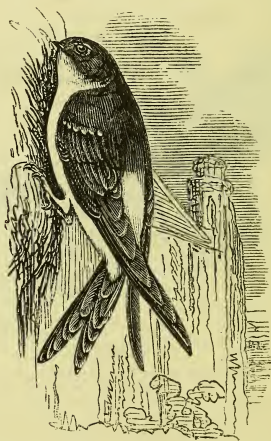
But, to these four species, some add a fifth,—namely, the bird sometimes called the Goat-sucker, and sometimes the Bee-eater ; though this, both in habits and appearance, is so very unlike whatever we usually call Swallow, that there is but little reason for thinking of it under that name ; and as little chance that my

young readers should fall into any mistake upon the subject. It is very true, in the meantime, that all these birds have wide mouths, and capacious *swallows*; and that, so far, they are all entitled to the name of Swallow. See my figure of the head of a Goat-sucker hereafter.



THE HOUSE MARTIN, AND THE SAND MARTIN.

I SHALL talk first of the Martins ; and here, my young readers must remember to distinguish between Martins, which are birds ; and Martens, which are small quadrupeds.

THE HOUSE MARTIN

is the bird which we very commonly call the Swallow.

In general, when we talk of Swallows' nests, we mean House Martins' nests. This is the bird which builds not in our chimneys, but in the corners of our windows, and under the eaves of our houses. It seeks for places that afford its nest a roof; that is, which shelter it, by projecting over it; and I shall presently tell you why. In this particular, as in many others, it differs greatly from the Swallow.

In New South Wales, there is a species, or a variety, of the House Martin, which, surpassing even our own, is so disposed to be familiar with mankind, that, (taking advantage of the constantly open windows, in the fine season of its building,) it has been known to place its nest, to lay and hatch its eggs, and to rear its young, under the corner of a mantel-piece, in a sitting-room; and even under a table which stood in the middle of a drawing-room, and which was never moved.

The kind and hospitable family submitted to the inconveniences of this intrusion; and even the children (though they rather disturbed the Martins, by sometimes peeping into the nest under the mantel-piece,) were such

kind and well-behaved children, that they did no harm to any of the little family.

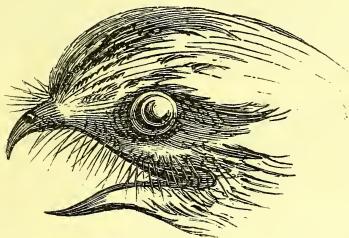
Martins both come into England and depart from it a few days earlier than Swallows. The plumage of the House Martin is white and black ; but what is black varies, in certain lights, to a rich glossy blue. It is about five inches and a half in length. The Sand Martin is smaller ; for it measures no more than four inches and nine lines. It is the smallest of our Swallow tribe.

The Sand Martin is of an ash-colour above, and white beneath, but its throat is surrounded by a mouse-coloured ring. It is less numerous, and more limited to particular places, than the other sorts of Swallow. It is chiefly seen about rivers, where it makes its nest in the sandy banks, and always above high water-mark, so as to have nothing to fear from inundations. Or, it chooses the sides of sand-pits, where it finds such ; and burrows two feet deep, in a circular and serpentine path, before it begins the chamber which is to contain its nest. Sometimes, also, it takes possession of the nests of Kingfishers and Bee-eaters ; and occasionally avails itself of

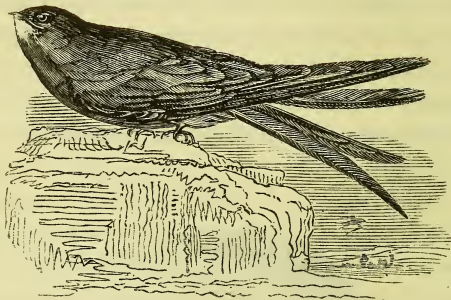
holes in walls, a cavity in a quarry, or the hollow of an old tree.

Sand Martins have a low muttering voice, and in their manners considerably resemble the House Martins, with which latter they also at times associate.

Below is a figure of the head of a Goat-sucker, or Bee-eater ; also called Night-jar and Fern Owl.



THE SWIFT.



THIS is the largest and most powerful of the Swallow tribes ; and, unless what is sometimes called the Alpine Swift, is more than a mere variety, it is the only species of its genus with which we are acquainted in Europe. It measures nearly eight inches in length, and eighteen in the extent of its wings ; though its whole weight is but an ounce.

The Swift is very distinguishable from the Swallow, in its colour, its figure, and its habits.

In colour, its body is black, and its chin white ; and

while it remains in England, its glossy black fades to a dirty brown.

In figure, besides many other diversities, its tail is conspicuously shorter, and its folded wings even project a little beyond it.

The Swift builds in more elevated places than the Swallow ; and its nest, instead of being formed, like the nests of the Swallow and the House Martin, of exteriors of mud or mortar, consists in moss, dry grass, small twigs, or any shreds of light and even artificial substances, often caught in the air, snatched from the surface of water, detached from trees, or stolen from the nests of Sparrows, or other birds ; and all lined and covered with the same viscid humour which enables it to catch, as with bird-lime, the insects on the wing, and of which a supply is always abundant in their throats.

During the middle of a very hot day, Swifts are seldom seen out of their holes ; but in the mornings and evenings, they are to be observed in troops of fewer or greater numbers, sometimes describing a thousand circles in the air, sometimes defiling along a street, or wheeling round a large edifice ; while at other times they sail

along, without any perceptible motion of their wings, and then suddenly and frequently agitate them, as if through some impetuous instinct.

Early in July, when their departure is approaching, they begin to assemble, their numbers daily increase, and large bodies of them daily appear together. They soar higher in the air, utter shriller cries, and fly in a peculiar style. These meetings continue till they finally disappear.

Though my painter has presented you, as above, with the figure of a Swift very comfortably seated upon a stone, it is not true that this bird can ever place himself in such a situation. He cannot walk, and he never alights upon the ground, nor upon any horizontal surface ; and can only hang himself by his claws against the upright sides of walls, rocks, or trees.

THE SWALLOW.



Look at the very long and very forked tail of this Swallow; and then, not to talk of its separate shapes and colours, be sure that you never again mistake a Swallow for a Swift, nor for a Martin.

A living naturalist sketches in a very beautiful manner the life of a Swallow:—

THE BARN.

“Observe,” says he, “that passing Swallow. How

swiftly it glides around us, how frequently she comes and goes, how graceful her flight, how pleasant her musical twitterings, how happy she seems to be! Now she has again entered the barn. I will follow her into her summer abode, and laying myself down on the fragrant new-mown hay, watch her motions in silence.

“Ah! over my head, a nest is firmly fixed to each rafter. Nay, on this and that rafter are placed several, and the barn is filled with Swallows and their melodies. Happy and charming little creatures!

“There, a hen Swallow sits on her eggs, and is receiving a store of insects from the mouth of her mate. Having fed her, he solaces her with a soft chattering voice, and away he goes, in search of more food.

“Here, is another nest, filled to the brim with young birds trimming their new clothing, and shaking their little wings, while their parents approach with a supply of food. See how they open their yellow throats!

“There, how busily are those two birds occupied in sticking layer after layer of damp sandy earth, mixed with bits of grass, against the beam! Dear things, their old tenement has crumbled and fallen down, or are they

unusually late? But their going and returning so often will surely enable them to accomplish their undertaking.

“Leaving them for a moment, I see some old birds meeting their young on the wing. How cleverly have the little things received the proffered fly; and now, away for more, speeds the happy parent!

“I wish I could count the number now in the barn; but I cannot do this, unless I first count how many young there are, and then double the number of the nests, to get at the number of the parents, by allowing two for each.

“I have done all this; and now I find that there are more than a hundred Swallows in the barn!

NIGHT.

“Night draws on. The sun is beneath the horizon. The farmer has closed the barn door. The Swallows enter by the air-holes.

“There is still light enough to enable them to find their nests, and now each has alighted on the edge, and is preparing itself for sleep.

“Here are no bickerings, no quarrels. All is peace

and concord ; and now, the labours of the day ended, how quiet is their repose ! I, too, may take a nap, among the fragrant hay, and dream of my distant home !

DAYLIGHT.

“ Daylight approaches from the east. All is calm, pure, and delightful.

“ The little birds shoot forth from their retreats, and with songs of joy commence their pleasant labours. What a happy world they are in !

“ Here, a smart fellow roguishly challenges his neighbour, in all the pride of his full song ; or, listens for awhile to the gentler notes of his beloved mate, while she sits on her pearly little eggs.

“ Others have already resorted to the fields, the meadows, or the river’s side ; and there I will follow them.

THE MORNING.

“ The dew glitters on every leaf and blade, and the bright sun throws his glory over the face of nature, which joyously spreads out all her treasures before him.

“ The husbandman, who is perceived advancing toward

the scene of his labours, observes the flight of the Swallows, and assures himself that there will be a continuance of fair weather. .

“Numberless insects have already left their place of rest, and, like the birds, are seen in search of food, swiftly moving through the calm and balmy air.

“She of the forked tail (the busy hen Swallow) follows them with gliding motion ; and, with unerring dexterity seizes one after another. She seems hardly to exert herself on this occasion ; for all her movements, upward, downward, or sidewise, are performed with perfect ease ; and now she sweeps along like a meteor !

“How many circuits she makes in an hour is more than I can tell ; but numerous indeed they must be, since she is so long upon the wing, since the circuits are so small ; and since, as every one knows, she can fly a mile in a minute !

THE WATER.

“Now towards the sandy shores of the lake or river she betakes herself.

“She alights, and with delicate steps, aiding her motions by gentle flappings of her wings, she advances to the water, sips a few drops, plumes herself, and then returns to her nest ; filling, as she flies, her wide mouth with insects.

“Should her nest not be yet finished, or should it need some little repair, she carries in her bill a pellet of tempered earth ; or picks up a feather that has been shed by a goose or a fowl ; or, from among the hay, carries off a stem of long grass, to mix with the mortar.

“As the heat of the day, increasing, at length becomes oppressive to all creatures except herself, she passes and repasses round the cattle under the shady trees, and snaps away every teasing insect.

“Now, on the fence she alights by the side of her offspring, or else teaches them to settle upon the slender dry twig of some convenient tree.

“There, they plume themselves, and chatter and rest for awhile ; until, sorry that they have lost so much time, they launch into the air again, to resume their sports.

THE AUTUMN.

“ The summer has now closed ; and the Swallows young and old, assemble on the roof of the barn, and in a few days, are joined by many others, reared, perhaps, in humbler situations.

“ Each parent bird, we may at least fancy, tells her young, that before the dismal winter cramps or destroys the insects, Swallows must escape to some far distant land, where there will still be heat.

“ The talk becomes general, and day after day grows louder.

“ The course of the journey is pointed out, to each inexperienced traveller, by means of short excursions through the air.

“ At length, a chill night comes on, and that which follows brings with it a slight frost. The time has arrived ; and, on the next bright morning, the flocks rise high above the trees, and commence their journey.

THE JOURNEY.

“ About the middle of August, in some climates, but earlier or later in others, the old and young Swallows form more extensive associations, and fly about in loose

flocks that are continually increasing ; and now they alight in groups upon tall trees, churches, barns, and other high and solitary buildings, where they may be seen pluming and dressing themselves for hours, or removing the small insects which usually infest their bodies. At such times they chirp almost continually, and make sallies of a few hundred yards, always returning to the same place.

“ These meetings and rambles often occupy a fortnight ; and generally, in less than a month from their beginning, great flocks have set out for the south, while others are seen arriving from the north.

“ The dawn of a fair morning is the time usually chosen by these birds for their general departure ; and there seems no reason to believe that they object to a contrary wind.

“ They are seen moving off without rising far above the tops of the trees, or of the houses which they pass over ; and these large parties usually travel, perhaps, either along the sea-coasts, or along the courses of rivers, such places being most likely to afford them suitable retreats at night.

“ At night, they now betake themselves to the reeds and tall grasses, upon which they sleep while clinging. But sometimes, during a clear and fine evening, they continue their migration.

“ Should they meet with a suitable spot, they alight close together, and for a while twitter loudly ; as if to call to stragglers, or to invite other approaching flocks to join them.

“ In fogs, particularly at sea, they are often in danger of missing their way, and of being wholly lost. Upon the coast of East Florida, during a fog, immense flocks have been seen flying only a few feet above the water, for nearly an hour together ; and moving round and round the vessel, as if completely lost.

“ In leaving the reeds or grasses, Swallows, when the morning is clear, rise, in a spiral or corkscrew manner, to the height of thirty or forty yards ; then extend their ranks, and then continue on their course.”

THE ARRIVAL OF THE SWALLOWS.

“ In the spring,” says an American writer, “ the

Barn Swallow is welcomed by all ; for she seldom appears before the final melting of the snows, and the commencement of mild weather ; and she is thus looked upon as the harbinger of summer.

“As she never commits depredations on anything that men consider as their own, every body loves her ; and, as a child has been taught of his parents, so again the father teaches his children, to cherish the Swallows *”.

“Swallows,” says an English writer, “are delightful little creatures, not only as they come from a far country, the harbingers of the blooming season ; but on account of their industry, the ease and swiftness of all their motions, and the confiding disposition amid which they carry on all their operations.

“The most lovely scenes would lose much of their summer interest, if it were not for the presence and lively motions of the Swallow.

“The banks of rivers, and the margins of small lakes, are at all times delightful places for quiet contemplation ; but there would be too much stillness about them (suggests our author) if it were not for the movements

* See Audubon's Ornithological Biography.

of the Swallows ; now shooting into mid-air, now skimming the surface of the waters, and sipping and bathing as they speed along.

“ As the waters, also, are productive of insects, and as the same insects, dying natural deaths, fall into the waters ; so the Swallows, by devouring their myriads of those insects, contribute greatly to the preservation of the waters sweet and clean.

“ In these retired situations, the air is so still, that we hear the repeated strokes of the bills of the Swallows, as they capture those insects which to our sight are viewless.

“ The sight of the Swallow tribe is so acute, that they doubtless discern minute insects at much greater distances than they are visible to mankind. The sight of the Swift has been found, by experiment, to be such as enables it to see an object not more than half an inch in diameter, at the distance of four hundred feet.

“ These birds feed upon nothing but insects. They rid mankind of much of the evil which belongs to the multiplication of insects, and they inflict no kind of injury

in return. Hence, and for their other recommendations, Swallows, as we have said, are everywhere welcome*."

THE NESTS.

About a week after the arrival of the Swallow, it first repairs to its wonted haunts, examines its last year's tenement, or makes choice of a place upon which to fix, it begins either to build, or to lay its eggs.

The nest, in situations which require it, is a house, as well as a nest; for it is made large enough to contain both the old birds together, as well as all the young ones.

Of how solid materials the outside of the nest of the Swallow is built, you well know; but, perhaps, you will be surprised to hear, that while the weight of a single full-grown Swallow does not exceed an ounce, so much earth and other matter is often employed by a pair of Swallows in building their nest, as to make it weigh two pounds!

There is much difference, however, in the size, as also in the materials of different nests; partly upon account

* See Mudie's British Birds.

of what may be required by their situation, and partly through the time which the birds have leisure to bestow upon it.

A perfect nest, examined by M. Audubon, had occupied the birds seven days in constructing it; during which they laboured from sunrise till dusk, though with an intermission of several hours in the middle of the day.

Within the shell of mud and grass, however, or of mud only, and which is built with so much solidity by the Swallow, there is a bed of slender grasses, arranged in a circular form, and several inches thick; and over this is placed a quantity of large soft feathers.

The eggs are from four to six. Both male and female sit upon them, but the female longest. Each that goes abroad brings the food wanted by the other at home; and at night, both sleep beside each other in the nest.

What is called the Barn Swallow in North America, is the same species of bird with what is called the Chimney Swallow in England. But it seems that in North America the *Swift*, (sometimes so called,) takes possession of the chimneys; is there called the Chim-

ney Swallow, and leaves our Chimney Swallows to the barns.

THE SWALLOW TRIBE.

THE Swallow tribe, as seen in England, if we include the birds, for no good reason, called Goat Suckers, includes five kinds ; that is, the Chimney Swallow, or only Swallow, properly so called ; the House Martin, the Sand Martin, the Swift, the Goat Sucker. In North America there is a second species of Swallow, which is sometimes called the Chimney Swallow; but might equally be called the Wood, or Tree Swallow. This, too, is the bird which is sometimes called the American *Swift*.

Of all these several kinds, the Swallows have the longest tails, are the most numerous, and have the prettiest plumage.

The Swift, upon the other hand, is the most powerful of the tribe upon the wing. Toward the time of their leaving us in the autumn, the Swifts, now released from the cares of nest-building and their young, can sport and feed in the air for sixteen hours at a time, without

once alighting to rest their wings. The same time and exercise of wing would carry them from England to Africa at a single flight; and it is observed that, the same species, and in all probability the same individuals, range from the northern parts of England to the Cape of Good Hope and back again, in the space of about nine months in each year. May and June are the months in which they reach the different parts of England; and in August and September they withdraw.

The Swallow tribe, like that of the Humming Birds, is very courageous; the former attacking and driving away Hawks, Kites, and Owls, and other birds of prey, considerably their superiors in size. But these birds are more in the way of the Swallows than of the Swifts; so that the Swallows are more remarkable than the Swifts, for their spirit and vigour in this respect.

THE TOUCANS.



You have often seen, in collections of specimens in natural history, those black and red and yellow birds, with enormous bills, which are called Toucans, and which belong to the tropical climates of South America.

They are birds of very singular and very ungraceful figures ; but as showy in their feathers as they are noisy in their voices. There are many species, but all much resembling each other, as well in colours as in form. However ungraceful, in the meantime, in their form, they are abundantly graceful in their notions, when flying in their native forests.

Their bodies are narrow and slender ; but their short

wings, their broad and rounded tails, and their long and large beaks, equalling, in some of the species, the size of all the rest of the bird, they make, in a state of rest, a very clumsy and sluggish appearance. But it is only when in this state of rest, that anybody would think of them in this manner. As soon as roused by the discovery of food, or by any other circumstance, they are at once all energy; their motions in the highest degree graceful and elegant, and apparently performed with such ease and lightness, as to remove all the ideas that may have been raised by the seeming weight and inconvenience of their beaks, and by their remaining peculiarities. The beak, large as it is, is in reality very light in weight; and the bones and muscles of the neck are so strong as to enable the bird to move and carry it with facility.

The Toucans never move in flocks; and in all other manners and modes of living they bear much resemblance to the Pies of Europe; particularly the common Magpie and Jay. Their food consists of small or young birds, eggs, and juicy fruits; but though they prefer animal food to every other, they can live well upon fruits

alone. Their mode of eating a young bird, or a piece of raw meat, is thus described by Mr. Broderip, in the *ZOOLOGICAL JOURNAL* :—

THE TOUCAN EATING A GOLDFINCH.



“After looking,” says this writer, “at the bird which was the object of my visit, and which was apparently in the highest state of health, I asked the proprietor to bring up a little bird, that I might see how the Toucan would be affected by its appearance. The proprietor soon returned, bringing with him a Goldfinch, a last year’s bird. The instant he introduced his hand, with the Goldfinch, into the cage of the Toucan, the latter,

which was on a perch, snatched it with his bill. The poor little bird had only time to utter a weak short cry ; for, within a second afterward, it was dead ; killed with a very few squeezes of the Toucan's bill.

“As soon as the Goldfinch was dead, the Toucan hopped with it still in his bill to another perch ; after which he spent a quarter of an hour in plucking the feathers, breaking the bones, making the whole into a shapeless mass, and finally swallowing both bill and legs of his prey ; hopping, all the while, from perch to perch, and making a peculiar hollow, clattering noise, and his beak and wings displaying a vibratory or shivering motion. In short, the Toucan was in perfect rapture with his morsel ; and treated the Goldfinch very much as a cat treats a mouse.”

A more agreeable subject of description is the manner in which the Toucans, with their great beaks, compose themselves to rest ; and this is minutely related by the able naturalist, Mr. Vigors, who either has, or lately had, a living specimen of one of the species ; a beautiful bird, peculiarly gentle and docile in its manners, which suffers himself to be played with, and which feeds from

the hand. He is fed entirely upon vegetable diet, with the occasional variation of a boiled egg ; and yet nothing can exceed the richness and brightness of his plumage. He is extremely fond of washing himself, enjoying it in even very severe weather ; and is in other respects remarkably hardy.

As to his composing himself to rest, however, the great point is the care which he makes use of to protect his prodigious beak from the cold of the night, as well as from other injury ; all implying a great degree of tenderness and sensibility in that organ, and the reality of which it is not difficult to imagine, after we have looked at the numerous blood-vessels (accompanied, of course, by nerves) which spread their branches between the bony part of the beak, and the external horny covering. Toucans of many species have been seen in confinement ; and the manners of the whole resemble each other, in respect of what is now to follow.

THE TOUCAN GOING TO SLEEP.

“As the dusk of the evening,” says Mr. Vigors, “approached, he finished his last meal for the day, took a few turns, (as if for exercise after his meal,) round the perches of his cage, and then settled on the highest perch; disposing himself, almost at the moment he alighted on it, with his head drawn in between his shoulders, and his tail turned vertically (like a squirrel’s) over his back.

“In this posture he generally remained about two hours, in a state between sleeping and waking; his eyes for the most part closed, but opening on the slightest interruption.

“At such times, he would allow himself to be handled, and would even take any favourite food that was offered him, without altering his posture, further than by a gentle turn of the head.

“He would also suffer his tail to be replaced by the hand, in its natural downward direction, and would then immediately return it again to its vertical position.

“ In these movements, the tail seemed to turn as if on a hinge that was operated upon by a spring.

“ At the end of about two hours, he began gradually to turn his bill over his right shoulder, and to nestle it among the feathers of his back, sometimes concealing it completely within the plumage ; at other times, leaving a slight portion of the culmen (the point) exposed.

“ At the same time, he drooped the feathers of his wings, and those of the thigh coverts, so as to encompass the legs and feet ; and thus, nearly assuming the appearance of an oval ball of feathers, he secured himself against all exposure to cold.”

My little readers will have discovered, in this statement, the reason of the habit of perhaps all birds, as to their precaution against the cold, during night, or when going to sleep. The claws, legs, and bills of all those birds are tender ; they are without feathers of their own ; and it is therefore, that, upon these occasions, they put their heads under their wings, and crouch, and drop their feathers over their feet.

THE HOOPOE.

I AM chiefly indebted to the English translation of Dr. Bechstein's admirable book upon Cage Birds*, for the particulars which I am going to select concerning the Hoopoe.

The length of this little bird is about twelve inches, of which the tail measures four, and the beak, which is slender, curved, and black, two and a half. The head, the neck, the breast, and the lower wing-coverts, are of an orange brown. The rump is white, and the tail black ; the latter ornamented in the middle with a broad white band, bent into an obtuse angle.

Hoopoes frequent, in summer, the woods that are near meadows and other pasture lands. They feed upon insects, and are more commonly seen upon the ground, than perched among the branches of trees.

Some people put them into granaries, that they may clear them of weevils and spiders ; but it is an error to imagine that they will also eat up Mice.

* Cage Birds : their Natural History, Management, &c. &c., 12mo, 1835.

In the house, Hoopoes are not kept in cages, but left to range at will. But they are exceedingly chilly; and in rooms where there are stoves, as in the Continental fashion (a mode of warming which is highly injurious even to furniture, as well as to all living things), the poor birds are constantly upon the stoves, and will rather, as we shall presently see, suffer the unwholesome air to dry up and destroy their beaks, than move into a cooler place.

MOTIONS AND HABITS OF THE HOOPOE.

Exclusive of the beauty of the appearance and figure of the Hoopoe, its movements and habits are at once graceful, and even droll and amusing.

Dr. Bechstein observes, concerning a tame one, that it makes a continual motion with its head, tapping the floor, at the same time, with its long beak, so that it seems as if it walked with a stick; its crest, wings, and tail being also shaken as it goes: "I have had several," says he, "in my house, and have always been diverted by their singular grimaces. When any one

looks at them, they immediately begin their whimsical tricks."

THE TWO YOUNG HOOPoes.

Another gentleman writes us as follows :—

"With great care and attention, I was able, last summer, to rear two young Hoopoes.

"These little birds followed me every where, and when they heard me at a distance, showed their joy by a particular chirping, and by jumping into the air; or, as soon as I was seated, they climbed on my clothes, particularly when I was giving them their food from a pan of milk, the cream of which they swallowed greedily.

"In this manner they climbed higher and higher, till at last they perched on my shoulders, and sometimes on my head, caressing me very affectionately; and yet," adds the gentleman, "notwithstanding this, I had only to speak a word, in order to rid myself of their company, for they would then immediately retire to the stove."

Upon this, as upon so many other occasions, throughout my volume, how much my little readers must be charmed with the good manners and obedience, as well as quick understanding and ready attention, of so many of the little birds of which I tell them !

How much they must see that we of the human race, so far from being their superiors in such particulars, are often very far below them ! The shepherd, in GAY'S FABLES, talks of his learning fidelity to his master from the example of his Dog. "And in my service," says he, "copy Tray ;" and Cowper, still with reference to Dogs, observes,

" — learn we might, if not too proud to stoop
To *quadruped* instructors ! "

But it is not quadrupeds alone (as my little readers are here plainly seeing) that can give us admirable moral lessons, but simple little birds as well !

M. von Scauroth talks further of the amiable cleverness of his young Hoopoes. "Generally," says he, "they would observe my eyes, to discover what my temper might be, and to act accordingly.

“They would never touch earth-worms, but were very fond of Beetles of all kinds, including May-bugs. These they would first kill, and then beat them with their beaks into a sort of oblong balls, which, when completed, they threw up into the air, that they might catch them in their mouths as they fell, and swallow them lengthwise. But, if the balls fell across their throats, then they were obliged to begin again.

“Instead of bathing, they rolled themselves in the sand.”

THE YOUNG HOOPOES FRIGHTENED.

“One day I took them into a neighbouring field, that they might catch insects of themselves; and it happened that this gave me an opportunity of remarking their innate fear of birds of prey, and their instincts under the circumstances.

“As soon as they perceived a Raven, or even a Pigeon, they were on their bellies in the twinkling of an eye, and their wings stretched by the side of their heads, so that the large quill feathers touched, and the little birds became surrounded by a sort of crown, formed by the

feathers of the tail and wings, the head leaning on the back, with the beak pointing upward; a posture marvellously curious, and in which they might have been taken for so many old rags! Such was the disguise which they contrived for themselves, in order to escape discovery by the supposed bird of prey! But, as soon as the bird (whatever it was) was gone, the cunning rogues jumped up again, took their usual shape, uttering cries of joy!

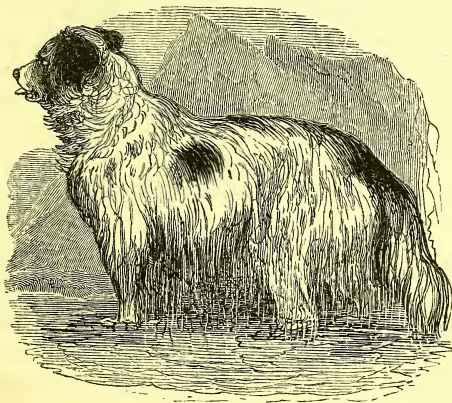
“They were very fond of lying in the sun; and in that situation would show their pleasure, by repeating, in a quivering tone, the sounds ‘Vec, vec, vec.’

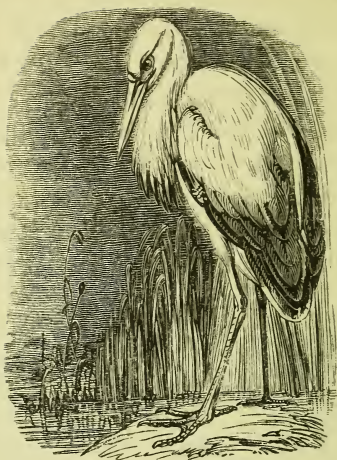
“When angry, their notes are harsh; and the cock, whose plumage is of a redder colour than that of the female, cries ‘Hoop, hoop;’ the cause that, in all the languages of Europe, and from the earliest days, these birds bear, and have borne, a name more or less similar to that of Hoopoe.

“The little hen bird had an unfortunate trick of dragging her food about the room; so that, by this means, she covered it with small feathers, and other rubbish, all which accumulating, day after day, in her stomach,

at length formed an indigestible ball, about the size of a nut, from the lodgment of which she died.

“The cock lived through the winter ; but as he would never quit the stove, his beak became so dry that the two mandibles, or upper and lower parts, came to stand an inch asunder, in the same manner that the two sides of the nib of a dry pen spread away from each other ! As this separation increased, the bird grew less and less able to eat, and thus died in the most miserable manner.”





THE STORK.

STORK ! Stork ! poor Stork !
Why is thy foot so bloody ?
A Turkish boy hath torn it,
Hungarian boy will heal it
With viols, fifes, and drums !

THIS is a Hungarian song, translated by Dr. Bowring,

who tells us, that when, in the spring, the Storks first appear on the island of Esalocos, one of those of the Danube, the Hungarian boys assemble with drums, and fifes, and violins, and welcome the birds with this simple song.

The translator adds, that it is a universal opinion among the lower orders in Hungary, that the Storks (birds which the Hungarians look upon with great tenderness) pass the winter in Turkey, where every species of cruelty is committed against them.

But this is merely national prejudice. The Turks are quite as fond of the Storks as the Hungarians. The latter, however, in times now long past by, suffered much from the invasions of their country by the Turks, and therefore think all manner of evil of them.

The Turks, in the meantime, are a people exceedingly humane to animals in general, and especially to Dogs and Storks. The Storks build their large nests about the chimneys of the Turks in Constantinople; and travellers declare, that such is the preference with which they seem to return the kindness shown them, that they invariably frequent the houses of the Turks

alone, and never those of the Greeks, or of the Armenians, though in the same city.

The Storks, in the autumn, fly southward from Hungary toward Turkey ; but it is not true that they pass the winter in Turkey. Even that country is too cold for them, and therefore they go further still. One of the reasons for the high regard entertained for these birds by the Turks, is the fancy in which they indulge, that as the Storks, in migrating to the southward from Turkey, take the direction of Mecca in Arabia, they go upon pilgrimage to that holy city ! To make the pilgrimage to Mecca (as every history will tell my little readers) is an act considered with the greatest reverence by all Mahommedans. It is one of their five special duties.

BIRDS AND INSECTS, AND THE FEEDING OF YOUNG BIRDS IN THEIR NESTS.

MANY small and pretty birds, because they eat either fruits, or seeds, or both, are very mischievous in gardens and upon farms : so that, while others admire and love them, gardeners and farmers are eager to kill them, and

often speak no better of them than if they were Rats or Mice.

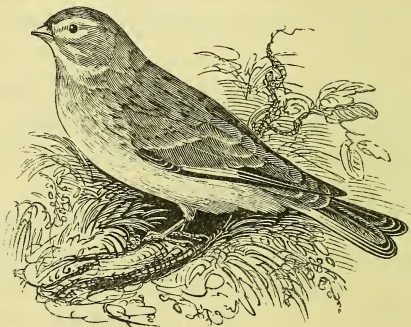
There are often mistakes, however, upon these matters, such as even gardeners and farmers are not sufficiently informed in natural history to be capable of avoiding.

Some of the birds which are supposed to live upon fruits, or upon seeds, really live only upon insects; and are actually looking for insects, when they are thought to be devouring fruits or seeds.

Others, though they live partly upon fruits or seeds, or upon both, yet live in this manner but at particular seasons; and are so serviceable in their destruction of insects, as not only to be well worthy of their wages, in the shape of the seeds and fruits which they really eat; but also are so necessary for the deliverance of seeds and fruits from the devouring of insects, that instead of grudging them their share of seeds or fruits, we have reason to be thankful for their enabling us to enjoy any of those things at all!

From the Locust, which is an insect so famous for its destroying powers, down to insects the least injurious to

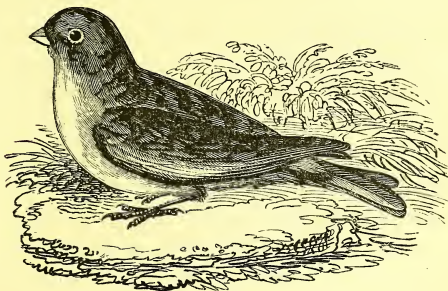
our articles of food, the ravages of the whole insect world are far more to be dreaded, than those of all the bills of birds !



SPARROWS AND SNOW-BUNTINGS.

SPARROWS, Linnets, and other small birds, are occasionally mischievous ; “ though, like the Rooks,” says a writer on natural history, “ they repay us with much good. The Bulfinch feeds on the buds and seeds of trees ; and the Chaffinch, though considered by many as a pure feeder on insects, certainly does the same,

particularly in the spring. Sparrows burrow in the corn-stacks, and devour a great deal; and in hard winters, the Snow-buntings, birds of passage, come to us from more northern countries, in prodigious flocks, and destroy still more corn than they can eat. Seeking for grain, they frequent the stacks; and, seizing the end of a straw, they deliberately draw it out. To such a



degree do the Snow-buntings occasionally commit this injury, that the foot of a stack has sometimes been found entirely surrounded by the straws in this manner drawn out one end resting upon the ground, and the other

against the stack, as they slid down from the top; as regularly placed as if by the human hand, and the thatch so completely pulled away, that it has been necessary to remove the corn.

“But all these birds, even if they did so at no other time, destroy myriads of insects when they require soft food for their young ones.”

Sparrows, as we further find from our author, feed their young ones thirty-six times in an hour, during the whole time of daylight. This, in the long days of spring and summer, may be reckoned at fourteen hours for each day; and seven times these fourteen hours, which gives the number of feeding hours in a week, makes three thousand five hundred meals for a young Sparrow, from Sunday morning till Saturday night!

Another writer, allowing a single caterpillar for each meal, reckons the number of caterpillars eaten by a nestling Sparrow in a week; and supposes that three thousand four hundred caterpillars are thus destroyed as food for one little bird, in this small space of time.

RED-STARTS.

RED-STARTS have been observed to feed their young twenty-three times in an hour, with the little green grubs from gooseberry-trees. This is two thousand two-hundred and fifty-four times in a week ; and more than one grub was usually carried away at every flight.



CHAFFINCHES AND TITMICE.



CHAFFINCHES will feed their young at the rate of

thirty-five times an hour, for five or six times together ; but, then, they will stop, and not return again for eight or ten minutes. What they carry are green caterpillars. The Titmouse gives sixteen feeds an hour.

Birds are great eaters. From experiments upon the quantities of wheat, flour, eggs, and canary-seed, as eaten by Greenfinches, Goldfinches, and Canary-birds, when confined in cages ; it has been found that what these, upon an average, will eat in twenty-four hours, is one-sixth of the weight of their bodies. Now, if man were to eat in the same proportion to the weight of his body, his food, in every twenty-four hours, must amount to twenty-five pounds weight !

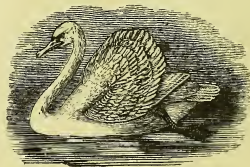
Sixteen grown Canary-birds have been found to eat, at an average reckoning, food of the weight of a hundred grains each, in every twenty-four hours.

THE FAITHFUL HEN-SWAN.

UPON a lake, in a gentleman's pleasure-ground, in the south of England, a pair of Swans had been insepa-

rable companions for three years; and in that time, they had reared three broods of cygnets.

But, last autumn, the male Swan was accidentally killed; and from that time, now many months, the female has obstinately separated herself from all the other Swans upon the lake. If any one of them approaches her, she either drives it away from her, or flies away herself.



HAWKING, OR FALCONRY ; AND HAWKS OR
FALCONS.



As hunting is the catching of four-footed animals with the help of Dogs ; so, hawking, or falconry, is the catching of feathered game with the help of Hawks or Falcons, a class of birds of prey which it has been found

practicable to tame, and to teach how to serve their masters, in the same manner as Dogs.

Hawking, or falconry, appears to have had its origin upon the plains of Tartary, and to have spread itself thence to the east and west, but not so much, or at least more slowly than to the southward, to the northward. In Rome, so late as the days of Vespasian, it was hardly known, but was introduced immediately after the close of that emperor's reign.

Ancient writers speak of it as practised nowhere but in Thrace and Britain. Even the Romans are thought to have learned it from the Britons. In Britain it was certainly an ancient favourite; and, up to a late period, scarcely anything historical, public or private, of any persons or events, either in England or in Scotland, is to be read, without our finding something or other concerning falconry or hawking.

Hawking, during a long period, was the constant favourite sport of the field among the Scotch and English. A man of rank scarcely moved without a Hawk upon his hand; and this circumstance will explain to young

readers the frequent appearance of Hawks in that situation, in ancient portraits of the nobility and others.

Harold, afterward king of England, is painted as he went upon an important embassy into Normandy ; and in the picture we see him embarking for his voyage with a Hawk upon his hand, and a Dog under his arm.

In a picture of the marriage of Henry the Sixth, a nobleman present is accompanied in much the same manner. The Grand Falconer of England is still a high officer of the king's household ; and the charge (now reduced to a mere title) is held hereditarily by the Dukes of St. Alban's.

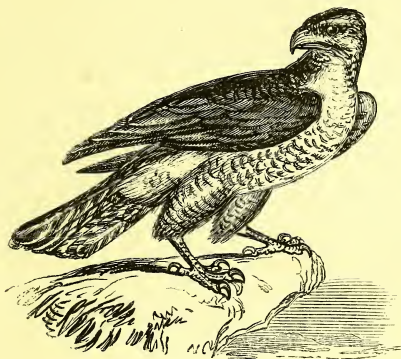
Neither was hawking an amusement absolutely confined to the great or rich. It appears from an ancient book, called *THE BOOK OF ST. ALBAN'S*, that all ranks of men were entitled to fly the several kinds of Hawk appointed to their station. At least from an emperor down to one of the clergy, his peculiar Hawk was assigned to each.

As, at present, for Horses, Dogs, and similar luxuries ; so, in those days, large sums of money were expended

upon Hawks and Hawking. As we say *studs* of Horses and *packs* of Hounds, so, our ancestors talked of *casts* of hawks; and in the reign of James the First, Sir Thomas Monson gave a thousand pounds for a cast of Hawks.

The species of Hawks, or Falcons, which used to be tamed and taught in the times of which we are speaking, are still found wild in Wales, and in Scotland and the Scottish Islands. The Peregrine Falcon inhabits the rocks of Caernarvonshire. The same species, with the Gyr Falcon, the Gentil, and the Goshawk, are found in Scotland; and the Lanner Hawk in Ireland. But the Danish and Norwegian Falcons were in high esteem with English falconers, and might be exchanged to very great advantage. It is upon record, that Jeoffrey Fitzpierre gave "two good Hawks to King John, in order to obtain for a certain man, his friend, the liberty to export a hundred weight of cheese;" and also that one "Nicholas the Dane bargained to give to the same king a Hawk every time that he came into England, in return for being allowed to traffic through the whole dominion."

Hawks were often connected with the tenures and grants of land; of which there are examples in the family of Stanley in England, and of Hay in Scotland.



THE AFFECTIONATE HEN-PIGEON.

Like to a pair of loving Turtle-doves,
That could not live asunder day or night.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE author of GLEANINGS IN NATURAL HISTORY relates the following tender anecdote concerning a pair of Pigeons, and of which the subject occurred lately, at Chalk Farm, near Hampton.

“A labouring man, set to watch a field of peas that had been much preyed upon by Pigeons, shot a Cock Pigeon which had long lived upon the farm. The mate of the poor bird, whom he had long cooed to and fed from his own crop, and assisted in rearing numerous young ones, settled by his side as soon as he was shot, and showed her grief in the most expressive manner.

“But the man had not yet done with the bird which he had killed. He took it up, and tied it to the top of a short stake, intending that the sight of it should frighten away other robbers of the farmer’s peas.

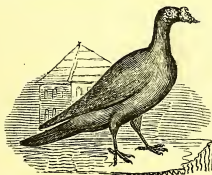
“Even in this situation, however, the Hen Pigeon did not forsake the body, which was now entirely with-

out life. Day after day she was seen walking slowly round the bottom of the stick !

“ At length, the kind-hearted wife of the bailiff of the farm, hearing of the melancholy circumstance, went to the spot where it was taking place, in order to afford to the affectionate Hen Pigeon what relief she could.

“ She found that the poor Hen, by her continued walk-round the stake, had actually made a circular beaten track ! She found it also still walking, but much exhausted, and yet now and then making a little spring toward the dead Pigeon, as it still hung upon the stake !

“ All the bailiff’s wife could do, was to take away the dead Pigeon, the presence of which thus perpetuated the sorrow of his late mate, and wore her out with useless efforts and attendance ; and when this was done, the bird, having nothing now to stay by, returned, alone as she was, to the old dove-cote.”



THE SNOWY OWL.



THE Snowy Owl is almost two feet in length, and more than two feet and a half across its large expanded wings.

M. Audubon tells us that a fine specimen of this bird was brought alive to him at Boston, in North America.

“He stood upright,” says he, “keeping his feathers close ; but would not suffer me to approach him. His fine eyes watched every movement I made ; and if I pretended to walk round him, the instant his head had turned as far as he could still see me, he would open his wings, and with large hops get to a corner of the room, when he would turn toward me, and again watch my approach. This bird had been procured on one of the sea-islands off Boston, by a gunner in my employ ; who, after following it from one rock to another, with difficulty wounded it, but only in the wing. In the course of the same winter, I saw a Snowy Owl sailing high over the bay, in company with a number of Gulls, which appeared to dislike his company, and which chased him at a respectful distance ; the Owl, at the same time, seeming to pay no regard to them.

“Hardly was there a winter which did not bring some of those hardy natives of the north to the Falls of the Ohio, at Louisville. At the break of day, one morning, when I lay hidden in a pile of floated logs, waiting for a shot at some Wild Geese, I had an opportunity of seeing a pair of Snowy Owls take fish after the following manner :—

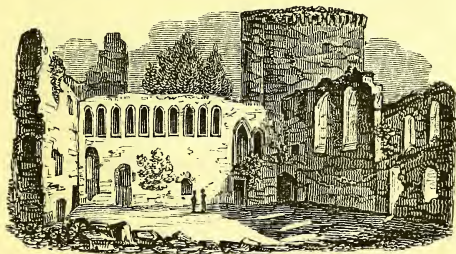
“ While watching for their prey on the borders of the ‘pots,’ or circular holes or hollows, in the rocks, they invariably lay flat on the rock, with their bodies placed lengthwise along the border of the hole, and their heads also laid down, but turned towards the water. Thus arranged, one might have supposed the bird sound asleep, as it would remain in the same position till a good opportunity of securing a fish occurred, and which I believe was never missed ; for, as the fish unwittingly rose to the surface, near the edge, that instant the Owl thrust out his foot, next the water, and, with the quickness of lightning, seized it, and drew it out. The Owl then removed to the distance of a few yards, devoured its prey, and returned to the same hole ; or, if it had not perceived any more fish in that hole, flew only a few yards over the many ‘pots’ there ; marked a likely one, and alighted at a little distance from it. It then squatted, moved slowly toward the edge, and lay down as before, watching for an opportunity. Whenever a fish of any size was struck with one foot, the Owl struck it with the other foot also, and then flew off with the fish to a considerable distance.

I never heard it utter a single note on such occasions,

even when two birds joined in the repast, which was frequently the case when the fish was of a large size.

“ At sunrise, or shortly after, the Owls flew to the woods. They hunt, however, by daylight, as well as in the dusk ; and prey upon birds and small quadrupeds, no less than upon fish.”

I have been surprised to find Mr. Mudie speaking of the Snowy Owl as if he believed the name to be derived from the bird's appearance in the midst of snow-storms, and when snow is upon the ground. But the Snowy Owl is as familiar with green woods and fields as with the wintry snows, and is called *snowy* only upon account of the snowy white of its plumage.



THE RAVENS AND THEIR YOUNG, OF LITTLE MACATINA HARBOUR, ON THE COAST OF LABRADOR, IN BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.



“No sooner,” says M. Audubon, “had the Ripley come to an anchor, in the curious harbour of Labrador, known by the name of Little Macatina, than my party

and myself sought the shore ; but, before I proceed, let me describe this singular place. It was the middle of July, the weather was mild and pleasant, our vessel made her way under a smart breeze, through a very narrow passage, beyond which we found ourselves in a small circular basin of water, having an extent of seven or eight acres. The basin of rocks was so surrounded by high, abrupt, and rugged rocks, that, as I glanced around, I could find no apter comparison for our situation, than that of a nutshell at the bottom of an ordinary basin ! The dark shadows that overspread the waters, and the mournful silence of the surrounding desert, sombred our otherwise glad feelings into a state of awe. The scenery was grand and melancholy. On one side, hung over our heads, in stupendous masses, a rock several hundred feet high, the fissures of which might to some have looked like the mouths of a huge undefined monster. Here and there, a few dwarf pines were stuck, as if by magic, to this enormous mass of granite ; in a gap of the cliff, the brood of a pair of grim Ravens shrunk from our sight ; and the Gulls, one after another, began to wend their way overhead, toward the

middle of the quiet pool, as the furling of the sails went on, accompanied by the glad cries of the sailors."

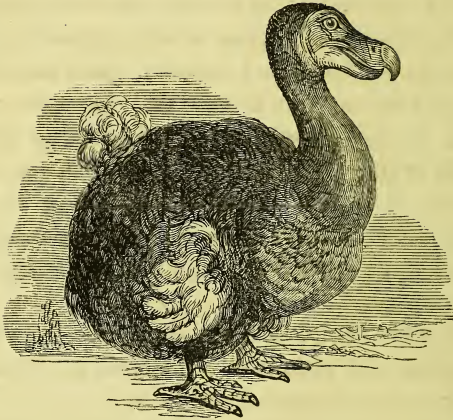
Such was the spot, as to sea and shore, at which our author witnessed some interesting characteristics of the Raven species, in the example of that singular family which we have now seen him mention:—"I saw a Raven's nest," says he, "placed under the shelvings of the rugged and fearful rocks that form one side of that singular place (Little Macatina Harbour). The young were nearly fledged; and, now and then, they called loudly to their parents, as if to inquire why our vessel had come there? One of them, in attempting to fly away, fell into the water. It was secured, and I trimmed one of its wings, turning it loose on the deck, along with some other birds. The mother, however, kept sailing high over the schooner, repeating some notes, which it seems the young one understood; for, upon hearing them, it walked carefully to the end of the bowsprit, opened its wings and tried to fly; but, being unable, fell into the water, and was drowned. In a few days the whole family left the place, and we saw no more of them. Some of the sailors, who had come to the har-

hour eight years in succession, assured me that they had always observed the Ravens breeding there.

“My whole party found it impossible to shoot one of the old ones who went to the nest, and left it with so much caution, that the task of watching them became irksome. One afternoon I concealed myself under the pile of detached rocks for more than two hours. The young frequently croaked while I was waiting there, but no parent came, so I left the place; but, the next moment, the female was seen from the deck of the Ripley! She alighted in the nest, fed her young, and was off again before I could get within shooting distance.

“It was at this place that I observed how singularly well those birds could travel to and from their nests at a time when, upon account of the fog, I could not see them on wing further off than twenty or thirty yards.”

THE DODO.



THIS bird is called *Didus* in ornithology, but it is right to tell young readers, that though Linnæus has described one species of Dodo, and Buffon three, there is still so much doubt, or at least narrow information, about the existence of the Dodo, that many writers of histories

of birds refuse to describe it, or even to name it ; so that many books may happen to be consulted before anything can be learned concerning the Dodo.

Even where it is said to have been known a century ago, it is regarded as being at present extinct. This is in the African islands in the Indian ocean, all originally colonised by the French and Dutch and Portuguese. These are the Mauritius, or Isle of France, now in possession of the English ; and the islands of Bourbon and Roderigo.

The Dodo, such as it is described to us, and such as my young readers behold it in this figure, may seem a sort of stunted or deformed Ostrich ; but it also seems to be allied to the Bustard, to the Turkey, and to the whole order of gallinæ, which includes the Pheasant, the Partridge, and our common poultry.

Buffon describes a species of Dodo under the name of

DRONTE, AND HOODED DODO,

and this is adopted by Linnæus, and called *Didus Ineptus*, or Stupid Dodo. It is said to have been nearly three feet in length, and somewhat bigger than a Swan.

Its plumage was a general ash colour, but inclining, upon particular parts, to yellow ash-colour, and to full yellow; the legs were very stout, short, and yellowish, and the claws black. The head was large, and, as it were, covered with a black hood or cowl. It had four toes, like the figure above; and it inhabited the isles of Bourbon and France.

A second species, described only by Buffon, was said by Fr. Canche to be met with in the Isle of France; and it is called the

MAZARENE DODO.

The bird was bigger than our Swan. Instead of feathers, it was covered with a black down. The wings were without feathers; but there were some frizzled feathers upon the rump, which served it for a tail. The legs were long and scaly, and it had but three toes to its feet.

It made its nest of dry leaves and plants, in the forests, and on the ground. The hen laid but one egg, which was white, and as big as a penny loaf; but what

was certainly remarkable, there was always found, along with the Dodo's egg, a white stone of the size of a hen's egg ; and besides, a grey stone in the gizzard of the young bird.

It is, however, only the third species,

THE SOLITARY DODO,

called Solitaire by Buffon, and left out of the system of Linnæus, that has a representation in my figure above. Its history is given by Seguat, who speaks of it as not uncommon in Isle Roderigo. He says that it was shot in the winter season, when, being fat, the young ones were in much esteem for eating.

The Solitary Dodo is, or at least was, a large bird. The cock weighed, in some instances, as much as forty-nine pounds ; and it had a noble and elegant gait.

It was called the Solitary Dodo, because more than a pair were seldom seen together.

The neck was of a proportionable length, and its eye was black and lively.

Its body was covered with feathers, which were of

grey and brown colours, intermixed. The female's plumage, at some seasons, was brown, and at others of a light yellow colour; and was always of a beautiful appearance.

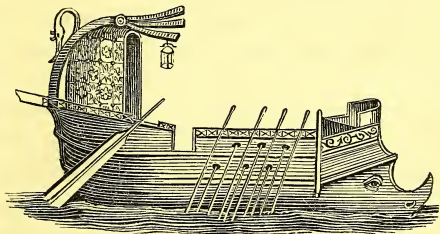
The Solitary Dodo had scarcely any tail; and the wings were too short for flight. Its pinions, or bastard wings, swelled out into round knobs. The feathers upon each side of the breast were enlarged into two white tufts; and those of the thighs were rounded like eggshells.

The Solitary Dodo made its nest in retired places, using for that purpose the leaves of a species of the palm-tree; and, as is related of the Mazarene Dodo, (though without any addition about the *stones*,) it laid but one egg, which was of the size of the egg of a Goose.

The cock sat alternately with the hen; and, when the hen was sitting, he would not suffer any other bird to approach nearer than two hundred yards from the nest. He kept this watch, unless when sitting himself, during the whole time of the sitting, which was seven weeks.

That so large a bird, confined to islands of small size,

incapable of flight, and pursued for eating, should have been exterminated, at least as to those islands, by the guns of even the early colonists, is a circumstance at no variance with probability ; and I confess that, after all the particulars stated, I have difficulty in thinking that its history was originally "fictitious." But be the truth of this matter as it may, the singularity of the case, the singularity of the figure and description which is given of the bird, and the singularity of the frequent silence, or else contempt of authors concerning the Dodo, have determined me, both to introduce the figure and to speak of it with fulness.



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